

that men live without dipping into the thoughts of that state, and inquiring whether they are converted or not. A heaven and hell. What means the profanity of many, the coldriveness and formality of others, in the duties of religion.

2. How unequal to our professions of love to God and Christ. How comes this love of the world, so little care to please him, so little being affected with the dishonour done to him.

3. Our concern for his interest. If it be so, how comes it that there is so little sympathy with this bleeding, groaning Church? How is it there is so little wrestling at the throne of grace at this time?

Lastly, In the balance of your attainments, which you have sometimes had, if ever you knew ought of seriousness. Let us look on ourselves as we have been in some golden spots of our time. O! how unlike ourselves will we appear, unstable as water.

To conclude. Take this night a view of your ways. Behold them, how unequal they are to what God has done for you, and what you yourselves have done. And sure I am, you will see your hearts and lives a mass of monstrous deformities, which will be the way to true humiliation, which will prepare you for a communion day. Amen.

Presbyterial Exercise and Addition, Selkirk, March, 2, 1731.

DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

SERMON XXIII.

EPHESIANS V. 33,

Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

THE apostle having, in several preceding verses, laid out the duties of husbands and wives severally; and having enforced them with most powerful argument, fit at once to convince the judgment and influence the affections; an argument utterly unknown to the heathen moralists, being taken from the mysterious part of Christianity, namely, from the spiritual marriage and state of the mysteri-

ous case between Christ as the husband, and the church as his spouse ; doth here conclude that matter of the mutual duties of husband and wife, summing up the duties of both jointly, in the words of the text. In which we have,

I. The connection in the word *nevertheless*, *Πλην*, I shall not trouble you with the variety of significations heaped on this little word, judging the splitting of the words of the Holy Ghost into many different senses, in many cases, rather to cast a veil over, than to clear the meaning. Only some take it here for an illative particle, signifying therefore, or so then. And thus the words are a conclusion formally drawn from all the preceding points advanced on this subject. As if he had said, since thus stands the case between man and wife, between Christ and the church, therefore it plainly follows, that every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself." The particle seems to be originally an exceptive preposition, as appears from Mark xii. 32, "there is none other *πλην αυτου*, but he, or besides him." Hence, being used absolutely, adverbially, or conjunctively, it naturally falls to be an adversative particle, signifying but, or nevertheless ; as appears from Acts xxvii. 22, "no loss *πλην*, but of the ship." And it is confessed on all hands to be an adversative, only that adversative is said to signify illatively here, and Matth. xi. 22—24, and some few other places, on this ground, that the sense requires it. Indeed, if the sense did absolutely require it, it behoved to be admitted. But that it does not, as appears from our version of the places, keeping the proper signification, and making very good sense. That we find a proposition of such a nature, that it is fit to be inferred from what went before, will not prove that it is a formal consequence in the intention of the penman ; nothing being more ordinary than such propositions made without any such view ; therefore the ground advanced is not sufficient for affixing that new signification to that word.

We take it then adversatively, *but* or *nevertheless*, as 1 Cor. xi. 10, 11 ; so it serves to pass from the purpose last insisted upon, and to resume the former. The apostle having, upon occasion of discoursing on the relation of husband and wife, brought in the great gospel mystery of the mystical union betwixt Christ and believers, does hereby bring them back from that consideration of faith to the practice of moral duties, as better fitted by the the former for the latter. And so he guards them against that bias of corrupt human nature, by which it is apt to lose its concern for the practice of moral duty, in idle speculation of the mysteries of Christianity ; whereas all these mysteries are in their native tendency practical, tending to the sanctification of the true believer of them. Thus far of the connection. Let us,

II. Attend to the purpose of the text. This is twofold,

1. One relating to husbands, binding their duty on them as such. "Let every one of you," &c. And here we have the subjects of this duty pointed out, and that two ways: 1. Generally, you, *υμεις*. I find some translators take this word for a nominative put absolutely, and here place the comma; reading thus, "therefore as to you also," By which means the word comprehends both the husbands and the wives. But the distribution immediately made of this *you*, in the words *οι καθ' ενα*, "you one by one," with the rest of the connection, seems to spoil this. We take it then to be meant immediately of the Ephesian husbands only. But since the Bible is the voice of God to every one to whom it comes, it is meant also mediately, of every husband to whom the Bible has come, or shall come, to the end of the world. God herein speaks to all of them generally, whether they be great or small, noble or ignoble. For whatever freedom some persons of distinction fancy themselves at in these matters, they will find themselves in the end to have been as fast bound by the divine order as the meanest. 2. Distributively. You in particular, or more literally, you one by one. The apostle thinks it not enough to speak this to them all in general, but addresses himself on this point, one by one. Men are apt to fancy themselves overlooked in a crowd, and even what is but said to all in general, is in effect said to none. Therefore, that none may think themselves passed over, he so directs his speech to every one in particular, as if he spoke to none but him.

Now these, "you, you one by one," are doubtless nominatives; but they have no agreeing verb here, for that which follows is of the singular number, and has a nominative of its own. They might either, then, be put absolutely or elliptically. To the last of these, the copulative *και*, *also*, seems plainly to lead, looking back to what is said before, of Christ's loving his church; as if had said, but you also, one by one, do so. Love you also your wives. But this the apostle passeth for a more particular and forcible phrase immediately subjoined, "Let each one love his own wife."

The duty itself. One's loving his own wife so, even as himself. Here we may consider the substance of the duty; love, the grand duty of Christianity. So soft, sweet, and lovely a duty, that it argues a mighty depravation of human nature akin to devilism, that it can so hardly get access, and keep its ground among men; and the excellency of the heavenly state, that there is nothing breathed there but love. We have also the determination, or specification of this love by its peculiar object. It is conjugal love, the love of one's own wife, *την εαυτου γυναικα*. This is that species of love which of

right is incommunicable, and admits of no partner. The apostle has once and again urged it in the context, and you have heard it already explained. But here he brings it in again, partly the more to inculcate it as a necessary duty, and especially to teach us, that as love is the sum, or comprehensive duty of the whole law, so conjugal love is the sum, or comprehensive duty of the husband to the wife.

We have also the nature of this love, or qualities requisite to constitute it. One is to love his wife so, even as himself. These words I conceive not to run into one, as if he had said so as, but to point at two different things, namely, 1. The rule of this love, or explanatory cause of it. So, that is, as Christ loved the church; that is the Christian husband's pattern he must copy after in the love of his wife. The church had many faults and blemishes, yet he loved her. He loved her sincerely, purely and singularly; by all means seeking the good both of her soul and body, for which he exerted himself to the utmost. Even so should men love their wives, in a like manner; expressing that love, as much as may be, in their conduct. 2. The reason of this love, "even as himself." This cannot belong to the rule of it, as if the particle *as* was only a note of similitude pointing to the love of one's self, as a subordinate rule, to which one is to conform in the love of his wife; for in that sense one is to love every man as himself. But surely there is something here required peculiarly in favour of his wife; therefore it points to the reason of it, namely, that one is to love his wife because she is his other self, one flesh with him, or one body, 1 Cor. vi. 16.

The manner of binding this duty on men is remarkably particular. Let every one *εκαστος*, love his own wife. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. The apostle first addresses himself in this matter to all in general; secondly, he distributes them one by one, as addressed; and now, thirdly, in the very same sentence, comes in with another word, carrying the duty to every husband's door, every one love his wife, even as himself. This must sufficiently establish both the weight of the matter, the proneness of human nature to shuffle its neck out of the soft yoke, and the apostle's earnest desire to fix it, and closely to apply it to them.

2. Part of the purpose of the text is that relating to wives, binding their duty on them as such. "And the wife see that she reverence her husband." And in this we may consider,

The subject of this duty pointed out. The wife, *ἡ γυνή*. The word signifies, either simply a woman, as Matth. v. 28; or a wife,

as Matth. i. 20; even as the other word *ανηρ*, here used, signifies simply a man or a husband. But this makes no ambiguity, in regard that it is in relation the one to the other, they signify husband and wife; so that a man's *γυνή* is always a man's wife. Thus Tit. i. 6, *μᾶς γυναικος ανηρ*, literally the man of one woman, is the husband of one wife. This is common style in the Old Testament, Gen. xvi. 3. Sarah gave Hagar to Abram her man for a woman, that is, husband-wife. By which phraseology, the holy language, in the very frame of it, bars all mixtures, but in the state of marriage; none being one's woman, in the language of the Holy Ghost, but his wife. Now here it is plain the words stand in relation the one to the other; so *γυνή* is the wife, the subject of the charge here given.

The subject is pointed out indefinitely, not that they are more ready than the husbands to perform their duty, or that the apostle was less concerned to bind it on them; but that since all relations are mutual, standing or falling together, this was indeed the natural way of expressing what remained. The wife indefinitely, as the husband also in the original, not her husband. But that is in effect, as if he had said, your wives, one by one; every one's wife in particular; for the reasons given in the former case. We have next,

The duty itself. She is to reverence her husband. Here is something new, which we had not before. The apostle had called wives to submit themselves, and be subject to their husbands, vers. 22—24. Here he points them to the principle that must be the spring of that their subjection if they would behave themselves as Christian women, that is, reverence of their husbands, *φοβῆται*, *reverence*. The word in general signifies fear, being in itself indifferent to reverence or servile fear, 1 John iv. 18. But here, without question, the fear meant is reverence. A kind of fear joined with love, competent to inferiors towards superiors, and consequently to the wife, whose superior God has made the husband. The formal ground on which reverence proceeds, is superiority or super-eminency; the rays of which, as it were, reflected on the conscience, strike reverence. Hence our supreme reverence is due to God: "Holy and reverend is his name." But forasmuch as he has impressed of the image of his supremacy on some, even on all superiors, and particularly on husbands; on whomsoever he has impressed it, it challengeth a proportionable reverence from us. Therefore, that superiority and supremacy which God has impressed in the character of a husband, as a lineament of his own image and supremacy, 1 Cor. xi. 3, ought so to touch the conscience of the wife with awful regard to it, that she should fear to offend him, and be careful to honour

him, and behave respectfully to him in word and deed, 1 Peter iii. 2—6.

We have lastly the manner of binding this duty on wives. It is remarkably singular. And the wife *see* that she reverence her husband. (Greek,) and the wife that she reverence her husband. In this phraseology, there is something either wanting or redundant. Some take the phrase to be pleonastic, accounting *iva* redundant, and to be neglected in a translation. But such a mere pleonism, without any emphasis, should, I think, be the very last refuge in the case of the words of the Holy Ghost, therefore I take the phrase, with others, to be elliptical. It is an observation of a late judicious writer, that ellipsis often makes the language strong and close. And I make no question, but such is the ellipsis here; which, though it must be supplied in a version, yet cannot be equalled by the supplied phrase, the imagining of the thing being lost. It is an ellipsis of affection, kindled by the subject-matter stopping, and then precipitating the course of the words. This is usual in the style of the Scripture, Mark xiv. 49, “but (it is unavoidable) that the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” Mark v. 23, “(I pray thee), come and lay thy hands on her.” Gen. xxvi. 7; Matth. xxv. 9; Rom. xi. 21, compare ver. 20. Thus here, “the wife (see) that she.” &c. This elliptical phraseology supposeth the darting forth of the rays of super-eminency commanding reverence. This is also expressed by the Syriac, in an Old Testament phrase, “let the wife be fearing from her husband.”

But passing that mystery of faith, the mystical union, and to return to moral duty; I say to you all in general that are husbands, and to you one by one, “let every one of you love his own wife” in the manner Christ loved his church; and that because she is his other self; and let every wife be struck with reverence of her husband, in respect of the character God has impressed on him with relation to her, moving her to carry towards him with all becoming regard.

DOCTRINE I. It is the nature of true Christianity to join a careful, tender regard for moral duty with the believing consideration of the mysteries of faith. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church. “Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself.”

The truth of this doctrine appears, if we consider,

1. That the great design and end of the whole contrivance of the gospel mystery was the restoration of morality, lost in the world by Adam's fall. That is, to bring men back again to the love of God, in their duty to him and one another, according to the moral law, the eternal rule of righteousness. This might be shewn by parts, that it was for this end Christ died. “He gave himself for

us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works." Believers are united and married to Christ for this very purpose, "that they might bring forth fruit unto God." But let it here suffice, that the mystery of Christ is in general determined to be great. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

2. That the faith of these mysteries is the channel, and the only channel of true morality acceptable in the sight of God. Whatever other way vain man may think to arrive at a temper of spirit and course of life pleasing to God, call it holiness or virtue, which they please, this Bible acknowledges no way of sanctification of a sinner, but in Christ, united to him by faith, 1 Cor. i. 2; Acts xxvi. 18; and true moral virtue another way produced, is as great an absurdity in the doctrine of Christianity, as fruit brought forth by a branch separated from the stock, John xv. 5.

USE. This shews the vanity and self-deceiving, 1. Of those who hug themselves in their pretended faith of the glorious mysteries of the gospel; but in the meantime their faith of them, such as it is, never makes them a whit more holy nor tender in the practice of moral duty, but leaves them at liberty there. I would say to such, as James doth, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead." Vain are such means as reach not the end, the meat that does not nourish, the clothes that do not warm; so vain is that faith of the gospel mysteries to thee, that do not sanctify thee, and make thee careful of moral duty. 2. Of those who hug themselves in their pretended moral duties and virtues, separate from the faith of the glorious mysteries of the gospel, and running in a different channel, that being left bare, as fitted only for speculation. Such rationalists bewray their natural blindness and ignorance of the mystery of Christ with the Pharisees their predecessors, rejecting the counsel of God as weak and ineffectual, Luke vii. 30, which yet is the power of God and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. What wisdom then is there in them?

DOCTRINE. II. It is the duty of husbands to love their wives, and that in such a manner as Christ loved his church; looking upon them as a piece of themselves. This is the principal doctrine of this part of the text; but having been already handled on the 25th and 28th verses, I shall pass it over with this reflection, that no doctrine carries morality to that height of purity and beneficialness to mankind which the doctrine of Christ doth. So that it is quite evi-

dent, that the greatest masters of reason are not the best Christians; that there is an understanding necessary for discerning the truths of the gospel in their native beauty, of which men are by nature destitute, of which the apostle speaks, when he says, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

DOCTRINE III. Close application of the truths of the word, and coming over the same truths again and again, is necessary for our getting benefit by them.

The reason of the former is, because of that aversion that is in our nature to spiritual truths, founded upon the tendency that is in them to holiness, on which account our unholy nature lies cross to them, because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Hence men naturally ward them off, as the refractory bullock does the yoke. While they are kept from being closely applied, the corruption of nature is not hurt by them; but being closely applied, it must needs lose ground. Thus David's conscience remained peaceable, though impure, while Nathan held his parable in the general. But when he applied it to him in particular, saying, thou art the man, he fell like a bird shot from a tree.

The reason of the latter is, because impressions received easily wear off our spirits, and need therefore to be renewed. These that hear the gospel only to get their judgments informed, and therefore cannot be entertained unless they hear some new thing, do shew that they have little judgment of their own case; what upstiring their heart and affections need. "Wherefore," says Peter, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth."

USE. This serves to direct both preachers and hearers,

1. To making close application of spiritual truths. Let us who are ministers aim at applying our doctrines close to the case of our hearers; take it close home to our own particular case, that we starve not ourselves while we feed others. And let hearers make every sermon a looking-glass for themselves, by taking home the word to themselves. All the good which sinners get of the law, of its commandments for their conviction of sin and duty, or of its threatenings and denounced curse, for their conviction of their misery and discovering their need of Christ, comes by close application of its commands, threatenings, and curse, to them in particular. And all the good to be gotten of the gospel promise, is by a believing application of it to ourselves, for our justification, sanctification, and

eternal welfare. As the belief of the law, in general, without particular application, will never awaken the secure sinner; so the belief of the promise of the gospel in general, without particular application, will never give the awakened sinner rest to his soul.

2. That a seasonable and discreet inculcating of the same truths be not grievous to either of us, preachers or hearers. "To write the same things to you," says Paul, "to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

DOCTRINE IV. Christian husbands prove themselves Christians indeed, even in the love of their wives, by their displaying the influence of the pattern of Christ's love on their hearts therein, and of the ordinance of God, making them one flesh in their consciences. Their hearts are influenced by the one, and their consciences by the other, to love their wives.

USE 1. Hence learn that religion extends to the whole of our conduct; that whatever we do, we are to carry it along with us, and act by the rules of it. In every relation we must carry as Christians.

2. It is not enough that we love our relatives, and live peaceably with them, from natural principles of good humour, or in acceptableness to us for their personal qualities. If that is all, "what do we more than others? do not even the publicans so." It is necessary to prove us Christians that we be influenced to this by the example of Christ, and the ordinance and command of God having weight on our consciences.

DOCTRINE V, and *last*. Wives that would approve themselves to God in that relation, must carefully take notice of that superiority over them with which God hath invested their husbands, to reverence them on that account, and so submit themselves to them in the Lord.

All I shall say on this head, shall be comprised in these two things:—

1. There is nothing unreasonable or unbecoming in this, whatever you conceive your excellency to be. For, in effect, it is but submitting to God and reverencing his authority, whom I hope you allow to lodge it in whom he will. You claim that liberty among your own servants, to invest one of them with authority over the rest; and you challenge your authority in that servant to be regarded by the rest. This is the very case with respect to your husband. God has appointed him the superior servant. It is the ordinance of God. "I would have you know," says Paul, "that the

head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.”

2. All inferiority in relations is a situation in which God hath us on our trials for the other world ; taking trial of us what regard we will pay to his authority at second hand. All superiors of divine appointment, being to their relatives so far in the place of God, Psal. lxxxii. 6. So then, since it must be with us eternally, according as we regard the authority of God, or regard it not, now ; and in such inferiority the trial is taken of us, what regard we have to it. We may easily perceive how deep this matter draws ; and for evidence that God does that way take trial of us for the other world, you need but consider that, when time is at an end, all that inferiority of one of us to another is gone, because the time of trial is over, and so there is no more use for it. “ When he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.” No more subjection of wives to husbands, children to parents, people to magistrates or ministers. The more need, then, while the trial lasts, to approve yourselves to God as reverencers of his authority wherever he is pleased to lodge it.

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Selkirk, January 2, 1728.

MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM KNOWN TO BELIEVERS.

SERMON XXIV.

MARK iv. 11,

*And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.*

As the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, and the wisdom of God reckoned foolishness by the blind world ; so, in all ages, the one part of mankind hath reckoned the other fools, according as they have followed these different sorts of wisdom. Sinners think saints fools ; and saints know sinners to be fools. Tracing this to its original, it will be found to arise from that very different light in which spiritual things appear to the several parties, as saith the text. In which we have two things :

1. The spiritual privilege of some, with respect to the kingdom