

and honour, and person, while we stab his sin; and not, as one said well, "in healing a wound in his conscience and conversation, to leave a scar of reproach upon his person, and a brand of shame and ignominy upon his name:" that were to do the work of an enemy under the vizard of a friend. And thus I remember the Jews generally interpret that law, Lev. xix. 17; that is, say the Talmudists and Gemarists, "Thou shalt rebuke thy brother, *so as to reform him*; but thou shalt not rebuke thy brother, *so as to shame him*; thou shalt rebuke him in love and lenity: he that shames his brother by rebuking him, bears his sin; nay," say they, "he that shames his brother shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven:" their meaning is, unless the fault be notorious, and public, and scandalous; for then they may shame him: "I speak this to your shame," saith Paul.

(6.) *We must reprove meekly, not in rage, and passion, and bitterness, but in meekness, and sweetness of spirit.*—This rule the apostle gives. (2 Tim. ii. 25.) Though there may be some warmth in a reproof, so as to fetch off the hair; yet it must not be scalding hot, so as to fetch off the skin. Elisha * did that with a kiss which his man could not do with a staff: beloved, when a kiss will do better, O take heed of carrying your teeth in your tongues. Take soft words and hard arguments to convince gainsayers; and so gentle reproofs, and solid reasons, to reduce offenders.

(7.) *We must reprove scripturally.*—My meaning is, as near as we can, to reprove our brethren in scripture-text, and scripture-language, that so it may not seem to be we that speak, so much as the Spirit of our Father that speaks in us; and this is to reprove with authority. (Titus ii. 15.) What greater authority and majesty wherewith to awaken the conscience of a sinner than the word of God, by which he should be ruled, and by which he must certainly be judged?

Know, reader, that God took the author to glory, before he could finish this sermon for the press.

SERMON VIII.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL LEE, A.M.

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WHAT MEANS MAY BE USED TOWARDS THE CONVERSION OF OUR
CARNAL RELATIONS?

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.—Romans x. 1.

THIS noble argumentative Epistle of the apostle Paul to the Romans, was written and dated at Corinth, when he was now even ready to set

* In all the editions, this is misprinted *Elijah*.—EDIT.

sail for Jerusalem, as the messenger of the churches, to convey thither the collections of Macedonia, and other places in Greece, made for the poor saints of Judea; as appears by chap. xv. of this Epistle: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem;" (Rom. xv. 25, 26;) it being supposed to be the same journey which is mentioned in Acts xx. 3; xxi. 3, &c.

The time of the penning this Epistle, some place in the fourteenth year* of Claudius the emperor; some in the second, some in the sixth, some in the eighth, of Nero.† It is at present impertinent to decide that chronological controversy.

It consists principally of two parts; the first doctrinal, the second hortatory.

The doctrinal part spends its strength upon the great point of justification by faith, and its glorious effects. Unto which our apostle doth annex a notable discourse of the abstruse mystery of predestination, from the beginning of chap. ix., to the end of chap. xi.; and therein takes occasion to speak of that doleful bill of divorce which God had given to the Jewish nation. He treats likewise of the calling and fulness of the Gentiles, and the restoration of Israel in the latter days.

In each of these three chapters he sadly bewails the deplorable state of his own kindred; and, by all the evincing arguments possible, labours for their conversion to the faith.

To cut off any further prologue: in the beginning of this tenth chapter, he pours out his longings after their salvation.

In the first verse whereof, be pleased to observe these four parts:—

1. *Paul's holy groans and prayers*: "My heart's desire and prayer to God," *Ευδοκία της ημης καρδιας*. "The good-will, the hearty wishes, desires, and pantings of my soul."—He lays open the greatest earnestness of his spirit. *Ευδοκίαν—Την σφοδραν επιθυμιαν, φησιν, πολλην την σπουδην ποιειται, &c.†* "By this his *desire* we are to understand a marvellous strong intention of spirit, and an earnest study and endeavour about accomplishment." Hesychius expounds the term by *βουλεσθαι, εθελειν, αγαπαν*, "to will, desire, wish, love, and delight in the work." He wills it, not only as a possible achievement, but as amiable; he endeavours to compass it by all good means, because he proposes so desirable an end. The sincerity of our desires in obtaining of possible designs is manifested by our diligent endeavours in the use of proper ways to effect them. *Ουδεις των αδυνατων ερα, ουδ' επιθυμει, ως επι πολυ.*‡ "For the most part," says the philosopher, "no man delights in, or hankers after, impossibilities." No rational man, certainly. And therefore we are to conceive, that our apostle doth here, under his importunate desires, couch and imply all holy means to accomplish his end. Upon which account he presently subjoins *δησιν προς τον Θεον*, "his prayer to God" for that purpose: of which afterwards. Only at present observe, from the connexion of his prayers to his hearty desires,

* CAPELLUS in *Historia Apostol.* p. 76.

† CALVISIUS, USSERIUS, PAREUS.

‡ CHRYSOSTOM in *loc.*

§ ARISTOTELIS *Rhetor.* lib. ii. cap. 19.

that lively are those prayers which flow from the heart: most harmonious in the ears of God are those groans that mount up to heaven upon the wings of ardent emanations, out of the depth of our hearts; *suspiria e sulco pectoris ducta*;* when the words of our petitions ascend warm and reeking out of our bowels, when every expression is dipped in our heart-blood.

2. *The persons that were the subject of his prayers and desires: "For Israel."*—And here it is considerable in what relation Israel stood to the blessed apostle. They were his "brethren," his "kinsmen according to the flesh." (Rom. ix. 3.) "For I also," saith Paul, "am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." (Rom. xi. 1.) In another place he acquaints us, that he was "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews," that is, both by father and mother; "as touching the law, a Pharisee." (Phil. iii. 5; Acts xxiii. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 22.) It appears thence, that the Israelites were his kindred, his own dear and near relations, remaining for the most part in a state of ignorance as to the Messiah, and of alienation and estrangement from the covenant of grace, and the mystery of the promise through faith in the blood of a Mediator. For these it is that our apostle groans; for these he is so ardent in prayer; for these he pours out such earnest petitions to the Father.

3. *The great scope and design of the apostle for his kindred and relations according to the flesh, in all his desires, endeavours, and prayers, was, εἰς σωτηρίαν, "that they might be saved."*—The earnest solicitude of his spirit, the fervent petitions poured out into the Divine Bosom, did all combine in this,—that his *natural* might become *spiritual* relations; that his kindred of the tribe of Benjamin might, through union to Christ, be allied to him in the tribe of Judah. What is natural to animals and plants, το εφιεσθαι, οἷον αὐτο, τοιοῦτον καταλιπεῖν ἕτερον,† "to thirst after an impression of their own likeness upon another," is much more longed for by the saints, that others might be holy and happy, as well as themselves; but especially such as are nearest to them by the bonds of nature. Holy Paul doth not press after outward enjoyments; as health, strength, riches, power, or dominion in the world; that Israel might have prosperity and plenty in their streets and palaces, or that the kingdom should be restored to them from the Romans; not the great things of the earth, but the greater of heaven. This his soul travails with,—that Christ might be formed in them, and dwell in their hearts by faith, that so Israel "might be saved."

4. *In these words we may observe, likewise, the kind compellation, wherewith our apostle doth salute the saints at Rome, to whom he wrote this Epistle,—by the name of "brethren."*—Now, though he wrote to the Gentiles, yet he lets them know, that his bowels did yearn over his poor kindred, "that they" also "might be saved." The reason why in this letter to the Romans he doth so pathetically mention these his desires, with such strong and vehement asseverations, is, because there

* "Sighs drawn forth out of the deep furrows of the breast."—EDIT. † ARISTOTELIS Polit. lib. i. cap. 1.

were great numbers of the Jews at Rome, and principally of the two tribes that returned out of the Babylonian captivity; who, after the wars of Pompey, and other Roman generals and captains in Judea, were very many of them transplanted into Italy; which is not only attested by civil and ecclesiastical historians, but also by scripture itself, declaring that there was a solemn convocation of the Jews assembled by Paul at his arrival: (Acts xxviii. 17, &c. :) to whom the apostle did first preach the gospel, and related the story of his coming to that imperial city, by reason of his appeal to Cæsar.

From all these parts laid down together, there results this doctrinal conclusion:—

OBSERVATION.

That to endeavour the conversion and salvation of our near relations is a most important duty.

The precedent and example of our holy apostle, compared with and confirmed by other scriptures, will notably evince the truth of this assertion. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Cor. xii. 7.) One great end why God bestows the graces of his Spirit upon us, is, that we should spend the savour thereof upon others. Our discourse must be seasoned with the salt of grace, that it may minister edification to others. (Col. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 29.) Our speech should never overflow in abundance, but, like the waters of Nilus, to render the neighbouring plantations fruitful. Grace is sometimes compared to light, by reason of its diffusive nature; that our shining conversations might illustrate others in the paths of truth and holiness. Sometimes grace is likened to spikenard; (Canticles i. 12;) to perfumed ointment, (Prov. xxvii. 9,) which must not be shut up in a box, though of purest alabaster, but opened, that the whole house may be filled with the fragrant odour thereof; (John xii. 3;) to oil, to the costly sacred oil that ran down not only upon the beard of Aaron, but to the skirts of his garments; (Psalm cxxxiii. 2;) to talents, which must be industriously traded with, and not laid up in napkins; to dews, showers, waters, because of their fructifying virtue; to a generative principle, because of its begetting power and influence. We are therefore commanded, exhorted, directed to "edify one another," (1 Thess. 5, 11; Rom. xiv. 19,) to "exhort one another," (Heb. iii. 13,) to "admonish" one another, (Col. iii. 16,) to "turn" one another, as that phrase in Ezekiel seems to import, *וְהוֹשִׁיבֵהוּ, et converti facite*, "and make others to be converted" as well as ourselves; (Ezek. xviii. 30;) "to provoke one another unto love and to good works." (Heb. x. 24.) "When converted," we are enjoined to "strengthen our brethren," that we may "save their souls from death, and hide a multitude of sins." (James v. 20.)

Now, the principal objects of this excellent duty are such with whom we converse; such to whom we are obliged and connected by the bonds and links of nature, office, or vicinity of habitation.

Hence was it that our blessed Lord, while he walked in the valley of his incarnation, exercised his ministry [for the] most part among his

kindred, relations, and neighbours ; at Nazareth, Capernaum, Bethsaida, near the Sea of Tiberias, at Cana, and other regions of Galilee, in which parts he had received his education. Andrew, when he understood the call of Christ, the great Saviour of the world,—he presently seeks out his brother Simon, to bring him to the Messiah. (John i. 41.) Philip, after the like manifestation, looks out for Nathanael, and in a great ecstasy of spirit, cries out, *Εύρηκα, εύρηκα*, “ We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.” (John i. 45.) There are many instances of this nature both in the Old and New Testament. Abraham and Joshua were famous in their generations for this work ; they counted it their principal business, they made it their great care, to instruct their families in the fear and service of the great God. David also engages to “ walk within his house with a perfect heart,” that by his exemplary pattern he might gain over his family to the Lord. (Psalm ci. 2.) Matthew the publican, we read, did invite all the tribute-gatherers, that were of his own fraternity and profession, to a great feast, that they might sit down with Christ, and feed upon his heavenly doctrine. (Luke v. 29.) The great man in the city of Capernaum brings in his whole family to the belief of the truth. (John iv. 53.) Cornelius, the Roman centurion, who was quartered at Cæsarea, calls his relations together, to hear the doctrine of faith and repentance. (Acts x. 24.) The woman in the gospel, having found the lost groat, after great pains and diligence, calls in her friends and neighbours to rejoice with her. (Luke xv. 9.) Crispus, and the jailor, and Lydia, and Stephanas, are eminent examples of this duty ; by whose conscientious care and procurement it may be supposed, that their whole households came under the roof of Christ ; because, presently after that we have heard of their own personal baptism, we find their families also washed in that sacred laver.

I shall not insist upon arguments, to prove the incumbent necessity of this duty, or motives to allure you to the practice of it. I might deduce it as an inference consequent from the law of nature, to use our greatest endeavours that our relations might obtain an union to the best and highest good. I might draw it from the divine injunction. (Psalm lxxviii. 5.) I might excite your diligence, from the consideration of the dreadful danger following its neglect ; from the comfort that will flow into thy bosom upon the exercise of it, since it is a notable evidence of the sincerity of grace in thine own heart. None but such as have seen and tasted, can cry out to others, with an holy affectionate vehemency, “ O come taste and see that the Lord is good !” (Psalm xxxiv. 8.) The wine of the kingdom, having once warmed the hearts of saints, sends up vivacious spirits, and fills their mouths with a holy loquacity. I might further provoke thee to this excellent work, by the rich benefit in gaining such to love thee, whose affections will exceed all natural love whatever ; and by the great reward that shall ensue in the life to come. For “ they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.” (Dan. xii. 3.)

O brethren, if families were holy, then cities, then nations, would quickly prove mountains of holiness, and seats for the throne of God.

We are apt to cry out of bad times: Alas! those unclean nests of ungodly families have been the causes of all the wickedness in all ages and generations to this day. Therefore, whoever thou art on whom the grace of God hath shined, study that holy art of divine reflection, and repercussion of that light on others' hearts: which brings me to an useful and practical question.

QUESTION. You will say: "What course shall we take, what means shall we use, what method will you prescribe, that we may be able to manage this important and weighty duty; that we may be helpful towards the conversion and salvation of our near relations that are in the state of nature?"

I confess this question is of grand importance, and, being properly solved, may prove of great influence in all places where we are cast by Divine Providence. There is scarce a family, scarce a person living, who may not be comprehended within the verge and limits of this discourse.

ANSWER. In answer, therefore, to it, I shall spend the principal part of my time; and that I may handle it the more distinctly, I shall rank such as may desire satisfaction and direction in this weighty and excellent case under three forms or orders: such as are either superiors, equals, or inferiors. But before I enter into the main body of the answer, I shall crave leave to premise three things:—

1. *That this question is not to be understood of persons in public capacity and concernment, as magistrates or ministers; but of family-relations, kindred cohabitants, neighbours, friends, and acquaintances.*—Of such as have frequent converse together in civil societies, and often commerce in dealings; but principally of economical relatives, or such as are nigh to each other by blood or affinity.

2. *That saving conversion is in the power of God alone to effect, as being the primary and principal efficient cause of all those gracious works that accompany salvation.*—There is none able to kindle grace in the heart, but He who hath his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. Yet, notwithstanding, all of us, in our several stations, as subordinate instruments, may and must use all wholesome means that are of divine appointment, conducing to such a blessed end.

3. *That there are different states, conditions, capacities, and qualifications among such relations, whose conversion we should endeavour.*—Some being perhaps enormously and outrageously wicked; others morally civil; and yet further, others possibly may be conformable to the institutions of the external worship of God. Of these I may speak, *sparsim opere intertexto*,* as the particulars will bear, together with such other appendent cases that may hold some consanguinity with the general question.

To begin then with the first branch:—

QUESTION I. *What means superiors, principally in family relations, should use to draw on their inferiors to relish and savour the things of God?*—True it is what Jerome says, *Fiunt, non nascuntur, Christiani*,† "No man is born a Christian," but an heir of wrath and divine justice. For

* "Occasionally interweaving them in the texture of the discourse."—EDIT.
 † HIERONYMUS *ad Lectam*, tom. i. p. 55, editio Lugd. 1530.

the obtaining of the new birth, then, in such as are committed to our charge, I shall draw up directions under twelve heads. Some whereof, though usual and obvious, in such as treat upon economical duties, yet, being further improved, may by no means be here passed by in silence, since they are exceeding useful, and no less practical than others. Most men under the gospel perish for want of practising known duties; wherefore let me beg of thee, O Christian, that every prescription may be duly weighed, and conscientiously improved; so shalt thou not doubt of admirable success, through Divine assistance.

1. In the first place, *Preserve and uphold the honour and pre-eminence of that station wherein God hath set you, by all prudent means.*—The prophet bewails those times wherein “the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.” (Isai. iii. 5.) Distance of years calls for distance of deportment. A father may challenge honour and reverence; a master, his due fear and subjection from his servant. What is duty in the inferior to yield, is prudence in the superior to maintain. It is therefore wisely advised by the philosopher, that no persons should marry over-early: *Διαν παρεγγυς ειναι πολλην εχει δυσχερειαν ητε γαρ αιδως ήττον ύπαρχει τοις τοιουτοις ώσπερ ήλικιωταις και περι την οικονομιαν εγκληματικον τι παρεγγυς.** “For if parents and children prove too near in age, there may follow great inconveniences; in that too much propinquity of years diminisheth reverence in children, and oftentimes produces contentions in the management of family affairs.” Let such a distance be preserved, as may obtain the effectual issue of that counsel which Jerome gives to Gaudentius about the education of Pacatula: *Matris nutum pro verbis ac monitis et pro imperio habeat. Amet ut Parentem, subjiciatur ut Dominā, timeat ut Magistram.* † “Let the child esteem the nod of her mother in lieu of words, admonitions, and commands. Let the mother be loved as a parent, subjected to as a lady, feared as a mistress.” Condescension to mean, sordid, and contemptible actions draws scorn and disdain upon superiors. As reverence and obedience are enjoined to inferiors; so rulers should manage and order their actions with such gravity and sobriety before them, as may gain some awe and respect from their hearts. No wonder, if that ruler be contemned and slighted who disgraceth himself. Some are apt to count it a piece of gracious humility and lowliness of spirit; but they are greatly mistaken. It argues rather a base, low, degenerate temper. Be as humble before God, as reverential to rulers, as affable to equals, as thou canst; but ever remember to maintain the eminency of thy place above inferiors. It is not heavenly (no, nor moral) wisdom to entertain discourse of trivial and frivolous matters, with those that are under your inspection and government. Let converse with inferiors be spent, not upon superfluous, but necessary subjects. It is a good precept of the Stoic, to abstain from moving of laughter by jests among familiars; for it will have that influence, *την αιδω την προς σε ανιεναι* ‡ “to lessen their reverence towards thee.” There is a great deal of reverence to be manifested by superiors

* ARISTOTELIS *Politic.* lib. vii. c. 16.

† HIERONYMUS *ad Gaudentium*, tom. i. p. 101.

‡ EPICETUS, c. 54.

towards youth; if they would cherish and preserve *that* due reverence which ought to be in the hearts of young ones towards themselves.* And yet, notwithstanding, you must not carry yourselves with any proud, supercilious, or fastuous deportment; your countenance, though grave, yet must not be stern. As you need not indent your cheeks with continual smiles, so neither to plough your foreheads with rough and sour wrinkles. A sober affability, an unaffected and amiable gravity, will sufficiently chastise contempt, and nourish a reverent love. Rigid austerity in words and actions will produce a slavish, dispirited temper in children and servants; that when they come to years, they prove either more difficult to please than their fathers before them, or else so pusillanimous that they are rendered unfit to manage the work of their generation among whom they converse. It is a maxim of Plato: Σφοδρα και αγρια δουλωσις, ταπεινους, και ανελευθερους, και μισανθρωπους, &c., επιτελει,† that “over-much rustic slavery renders them dejected, illiberal, and haters of mankind.” Carry yourselves, therefore, in that manner, that they may neither fear nor hate your morosity, nor grow wanton upon the commonness and supinity of your carriage. If inferiors repute their rulers not wise enough to govern them, all their instructions will fall to the ground. *Regimen esse non potest, nisi fuerit jugiter in rectore judicium.*‡ “Judgment and prudence in a ruler is the foundation of the consistency of government.”

2. *Be frequent, and pithy, and clear in family-instruction.*—“Nature without moral discipline is blind,” could a Heathen say.§ Without heavenly instruction, it is sealed up to eternal darkness. We are all like barren heaths and stony deserts by nature: instruction is the culture and improvement of the soul. It is observed by naturalists, that bees βραχειαν λιθον εν τοις ποσι κομιζειν, “do carry small gravel in their feet,” to poise their little bodies through the stormy winds.|| Such are instructions to the floating and wavering minds of youth. The keel of their weak judgments would soon overset without the ballast of discipline; their conversations would soon prove unfruitful, or overspread with the rampant briars of vice and sin, unless well manured and laboured upon, and moistened with the sweet showers of parental teachings. (Deut. xxxii. 2.) Wherefore all inferiors are by God referred to their rulers, that they may drink-in the soul-refreshing dews of prudent precepts. Even women are commanded to “learn in silence with all subjection.” (1 Tim. ii. 11.) Γυναικι κοσμον η σιγη φερει.¶ “Silence

* *Maxima debetur puero reverentia. Si quid Turpe paras, nec tu pueri contempseris annos.*—JUVENAL, sat. xiv. 47.

† “Reverence to children, as to heaven, is due: When you would, then, some darling sin pursue, Think that your infant off-spring eyes the deed; And let the thought abate the guilty speed.”—GIFFORD'S Translation.

‡ Παντων δε μαλιστα αισχυνοο σαυτον.—PYTHAGOR. *Aurea Carmina*, 12.

§ “Above all witnesses thy conscience fear; And, more than all mankind, thyself revere.”—FITZGERALD'S Translation.

† PLATO *De Legibus*, lib. vii. tom. ii. p. 791. *Editio* Hen. Stephani. † SALVIAN *De Gubern. Dei*, lib. i. p. 20. *Editio* Oxon. § PLUTARCHUS *Περι Παιδων Αγωγης. Editio* Hen. Stephani, p. 2. || ÆLIANUS *De Animalibus*, l. i. c. 11. ¶ ARISTOTELIS *Pol.* lib. i. c. 8, p. 86.

is a woman's ornament," as a great master of wisdom hath observed. Their ears should be more exercised than their tongues. "If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home," (1 Cor. xiv. 35,) who are commanded to "dwell with them according to knowledge." (1 Peter iii. 7.) As for servants and children, the case is more evident and clear. (Isai. xxxviii. 19.) But in all your instructions, have a care of tedious prolixity; make up the shortness of your discourse by frequency. Thou art enjoined to talk of God's precepts, "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;" (Deut. vi. 7; xi. 19;) a little now, and a little then. "When thou wouldest accustom a child to any useful quality, begin betimes:" it is the counsel even of a Heathen; "but yet" *εκ προσωραγωγης δ' επιζειν*,* "inure him by degrees." As the precepts and axioms by which a wise man should guide his life, according to the royal moralist, should be *βραχέα και στοιχειωδη*,† "brief and compendious," so much more for youth. Long orations burden their small memories too much, and through such imprudence may occasion the loathing of spiritual manna, considering their being yet in the state of nature. As physicians, in their dietetical precepts, prescribe to children little and often; so must we deal with beginners in the things of God. A young plant may quickly be over-glutted with manure, and rotted with too much watering. Weak eyes, newly opened from sleep, cannot bear the glaring windows; scarce a candle at the first: "Line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." (Isai. xxviii. 10.) You must drive the little ones, as Jacob did, very gently towards Canaan. (Gen. xxxiii. 13.)

Entertain their tender attentions with discourses of God's infinite greatness, and amiable goodness, of the glories of heaven, of the torments of hell. Things that affect the senses must be spiritualized to them; catch their affections by a holy craft. Deal as much in similitudes as thou canst. If you be together in a garden, draw some sweet and heavenly discourse out of the beautiful flowers; if by a river-side, treat of the water of life, and the rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand; if in a field of corn, speak of the nourishing quality of the bread of life; if you see birds flying in the air, or hear them singing in the woods, teach them the all-wise providence of God, that gives them their meat in due season; if thou lookest up to the sun, moon, and stars, tell them they are but the shining spangles of the out-houses of heaven: O then what glory is there within! If thou seest a rainbow to diaper some waterish cloud, talk of the covenant of God. These and many more may be like so many golden links, drawing divine things into their memories. "I have spoken by the prophets, and used similitudes," saith God. (Hosea xii. 10.) Moreover, let young ones read and learn by heart some portions of the historical books of holy Scripture. But, above all, the best way of instruction, especially as to the younger sort, may be performed by catechisms, platforms of sound words, (2 Tim. i. 13,) by question and answer in a short, compendious method; whose terms, being

* ARISTOTELIS *Pol. lib. vii. c. 17.*

† ANTONINUS *De Seipso*, lib. iv. p. 69. *Editio Lond. 1643.*

clear and distinct, might be phrased out of holy scripture, and fitted to their capacities by a plain, though solid, style, and to their memories by brief expressions.

OBJECTION. But some may object, *that children not well understanding what they repeat, do but profane the name of God.*

ANSWER. To this I answer, *that our reasonings ought not to countermand or contradict divine injunctions.* We are commanded by God in the book of Deuteronomy, to whet the law upon our children. (Deut. vi. 7.) "Train up a child in the way he should go : and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. xxii. 6.) By the bending of young trees, and putting young fruit into glasses, you may form them into what shape you please. The apostle commends the precedent of Timothy to the whole Christian world, that *απο βρεφους*, "from a little sucking child," as the word imports, he had known the holy scriptures. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Some children have been sanctified from the birth, as is evident in [the case of] Jeremy and John Baptist. (Jer. i. 5 ; Luke i. 41, 44.) Now we, being ignorant who are under the election of God, must use the means to all, especially such as are under the federal stipulation between God and us ; such as are the children of believing parents. They are commanded "to remember their Creator in the days of their youth : " (Eccles. xii. 1.) And who should make such impressions of God upon their hearts, but those that are over them by divine appointment, who ought to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ? " (Eph. vi. 4.) As seals are to be imprinted upon the wax, while it is tender ; *οὕτως αἱ μαθησεις ταις των επι παιδιων ψυχαις εναποτυπουνται** "so teaching and instruction will best fix upon their minds while yet they are children." So soon as ever reason begins to sprout forth, yea, as soon as they are "drawn from the breasts," (Isai. xxviii. 9,) begin to season younglings with the sense of God's majesty and mercy. Gardeners begin to graft so soon as ever the sap begins to arise in the spring, and the bud of the stock to swell and enlarge. Colts must be backed before their mettle grows too high ; and heifers must be used to the yoke before they attain to their full strength, or else they will prove unserviceable. God commanded, in the old law, more lambs, kids, and bullocks, young turtles, and pigeons, to be offered upon his altar, than those of elder growth : first-fruits and green-corn must be presented to the Lord : (Lev. ii. 14 :) to intimate the dedication of our children (those reasonable sacrifices, Rom. xii. 1) unto the temple and service of God, while they are young and tender. The sooner you sow, the sooner you may reap. "In the morning sow thy seed," says Solomon. (Eccles. xi. 6.) The benefit of timely instruction is scarce imaginable. But I come to the third.

3. *Add to thine instructions preceptive injunctions.*—Lay it as a charge upon their souls, in the name of God, that they hearken to and obey thine institutions. "Every house is under a kind of kingly government," *Πασα οικια βασιλευται*, &c., *θεμιστευει δ' εικαστος παιδων η δ' αλοχων*, † "and a ruler gives laws to wife and children." An instance we have in the case of Solomon, who acquaints us that he was "his

* PLUTARCHUS *Περὶ Παιδ.* p. 5.

† ARIST. *Ρολ.* lib. i. c. 1.

father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of his mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live." (Prov. iv. 3, 4.) When David was ready to die, Solomon, the text says, was "yet young and tender;" (1 Chron. xxii. 5; xxix. 1;) and, notwithstanding that, his father instructs him in many grave and excellent lessons; (1 Chron. xxviii. 9, &c.) and in the book of Kings it is remarkable, that when David's decease drew nigh, "he charged Solomon his son, saying," &c. (1 Kings ii. 1.) Now when Solomon came to the crown, he was but eighteen years old, or nineteen at the most, as the learned seem to evince from several passages of David's reign.* How young, then, was he when his father David, and his mother Bathsheba, began to instruct him, and lay their preceptive charge upon him! This charging of obedience upon young ones is like the tying and claying-on of the graft upon the stock. *Non multis opus, est sed efficacibus.*† "Efficacious words rather than many are to be sought, studied, and used."

Nay, women have both precedent and precept also for this work; as who do more frequently converse with their children in their tender age? We have an excellent example in Bathsheba teaching her son, and pressing divine precepts upon his heart; she gave also a portion of instruction, as well as of food, to her servants and maidens. (Prov. i. 8; vi. 20; xxxi. 1, 15, 26.) Ancient matrons are commanded also by the apostle to teach younger women the works of sobriety and obedience. (Titus ii. 3, 4.) For this matter Abraham was commended by God himself, as a pattern to all posterity. "I know him," says God, "that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment," &c.: (Gen. xviii. 19;) and therefore God was pleased to reveal secrets to him. To conclude: It is good to edge your precepts and instructions with some notable remembrances of the great day, as that holy and learned Mr. Bolton did to his children upon his death-bed; for, speaking of the instructions that he had given them in the time of his sickness and before, he said, he hoped they would remember it, and verily believed "that none of them durst think to meet him at that great tribunal in an unregenerate state."‡

4. *Set a narrow guard upon the first sproutings of sin in their conversations.*—Crush vipers in the egg. Exercise your hazel-rods upon the serpents' heads, when they first creep out of their holes, being chill and feeble in the beginning of the spring. "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land," says David. (Psalm ci. 8.) You must set about this work betimes, check every evil and unsavoury word at the first hearing; watch the beginnings, the first bubblings of corruption in them. A man may pull off a tender bud with ease; but if he let it grow to a branch, it will cost him some pains. It is observed by experienced naturalists, that a common bringing forth nothing but fern may be made very good ground; if when the weed comes up tender and green, it be often cut down, you will in three or four times discourage the root, and

* USSERII *Annales*, pars ii. p. 56. SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S "History of the World," part i. book ii. c. 18. sect 4. † SENECÆ *Epist.* 38. ‡ Mr. Bolton's *Life*, p. 33. Printed with his Works, 4to. Anno 1639.

make it die away. It may prove so, through Divine blessing, as to the shootings-up of original corruption, if thou be diligent and constant at first. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines;" (Canticles ii. 15;) this is the way to destroy their race, as well as to preserve your tender grapes. David smote Goliath in the forehead; he smites the devil and sin in the forehead, *qui initio tentationis vincit*,* "that falls upon and overcomes temptation at first." It is a saying of Salvian: *Cum primum homo peccare incipit, æternum sibi accendit ignem*: † "When one first begins to sin, then he kindles the eternal fire." O that you would then begin to cast water upon the first kindlings of sin in your little ones! Cut off the occasions of sin by prudent interposition. It is strange to see what excuses and palliations for sin, what collusions in speech, little children will use! Before thou canst teach them to speak plain English, the devil and a corrupt heart will teach them to speak plain lies. While their tongues do yet falter much in pronunciation, they will falter more in double-speaking. What great need is there, then, to put a curb and bridle upon thy child's tongue as well as thine own! (Psalm xxxix. 1.) Undermine their fallacies by discreet examinations and sagacious questions. If this work be not set-to betimes, possibly in process of years they may prove too cunning to be caught, unless thou season them quickly with the awe of God's judgments, and the danger of sin. Teach their conscience to blush, as well as their cheeks, that they may, from an in-wrought principle, eschew the evil and do the good. Else they may too soon prove like the hares in Ælian, that by leaping this way and that way, when they come nigh their muse, *ταραξας τα ιχθυη*, ‡ "do confound their footsteps to prevent discovery." If thou suffer a child, or a young servant, to go on in sin unregarded, untaught, unchid, and think it is too little to mind at first; that sinful folly will be thy scourge in the end. God many times whips an aged parent by that child which was unwhipped at first. Adonijah had well-nigh broken the design of David about Solomon's being set in the throne; whom his father had never displeased by saying, "Why hast thou done so?" that is, never checked him for his faults. (1 Kings i. 6.) The means to take away the root and foundation of evil customs and habits, is to fall a-weeding in the spring of thy child's life: *Ægrè reprehendas quod sinis consuescere*. § Reproofs will go down untowardly, when children come once to their teens, when their years come up to double numbers.

5. *Preserve them from evil society.*—David not only hated sin in general, but especially he detested to have it become an inmate in his house. "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight;" (Psalm ci. 7, 8;) that so the evil example and pitch-like society of wicked persons might not cleave to and corrupt his near relations. Children are like the polypus in Ælian, that turns into colour of that rock or weed in the sea that lies nearest. || Imitation is natural to children: associates and companions

* STELLA *in loc.*
 † SALVIANUS *De Gubern. Dei*, lib. iv. p. 116.

‡ ÆLIANUS
De An. mal. lib. vi. c. 47.

§ HIERONYMUS *ad Gaud.* p. 101.

"With an ill grace can you blame that which you have yourself allowed to become a fixed habit."—EDIT.

|| ÆLIANI *Variæ Historia.*

are the patterns of their imitation. Wherefore Plutarch, in his tract about the education of children, advising some Grecian "boys to be brought up with them," gives this precept, that these *συντροφα παιδια* should be *σπουδαια τους τροπους*,* "of virtuous manners and behaviours," lest children should contract some vice from ill society. For, according to the proverb, "He that lives with a lame man, will learn to limp." Nay, one greater than Plutarch tells us, that "with a furious man we should not go, lest we learn his ways." (Prov. xxii. 24, 25.) Children especially may be dangerously infected by lewd and corrupt company. Many children of godly parents have had their manners fouled and vitiated extremely by frequent and familiar converse with the naughty children of wicked neighbours.

6. In the next place, *let seasonable and prudent rebukes be administered, according to the nature and quality of their offences.*—Begin gently; use all persuasive motives to draw and allure them, if possible, to the ways of God. Tell them of the rewards of glory, of the sweet society in heaven; endeavour to satisfy their hearts, that God is able to fill their souls with such joys as are not to be found in the creatures. "Of some have compassion, making a difference." (Jude 22.) But if this will not do, then begin to mix some more severe expressions of thy holy anger against sin. As there is a concatenation in virtues, so in passions. Love and anger are not altogether *αυσυστατα*, "incompatible affections." Nay, love may be the principle and foundation of that anger, which shoots its rebuking arrows against the butt of sin. It is well observed by the philosopher: *Γιγνεται τα εγκληματα και αι μεμψεις εν τη κατα το χρησιμον φιλια*.† "There may be accusations and reprehensions connected with that love, which designs the profit and benefit of the persons beloved;" and that *ευλογως*, as he says, "according to the rule even of right reason." Thou mayest tell thy child, and that with some grains of vehemency, that if he continue in sinful courses, God will be angry, and thou wilt be angry; and then let him know what a "fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 31.) This is the way to "be angry, and not to sin," as the apostle commands. (Eph. iv. 26.) Let not your passions, like unruly torrents, overflow the banks that are limited by scripture and reason. There is a grave and sober anger, that will procure reverence, and advance reformation. That which is mixed with horrid noise and clamours, floweth from the breasts of fools. In vain shalt thou attempt to reclaim others, who art so exorbitant thyself. He that lets loose the reins upon the necks of the unruly horses of his passions, will endanger the tumbling his reason out of the chariot. How shall that person in his rebukes speak reason to another, that hath lost his own? He that is a slave to his irascible appetite, can never manage ingenuous reproofs. A child can never persuade himself that such anger proceedeth from love, when he is made the sink to receive the daily discharges of a choleric stomach; when the unhappy necessity of his relation ties him to be always in the way where an angry disposition must vent and empty itself. If thou that rulest be thus unruly, how canst thou expect thy inferiors to be regular, when thy

* PLUTARCHUS Περὶ Παίδ. p. 6.

† ARISTOTELIS Ἠθικ. lib. x. c. 13.

uncomely demeanour does almost convince them, that love can hardly be the genuine root of thine anger, but that they are made the sad objects of thy native temper, or that thy reprehension is spiced with hatred? Observe, therefore, a prudent administration of thy rebukes. Gild those bitter pills with the hopes of recovering thy favour upon amendment; mix these unpleasant potions *τοις γλυκεσι χυμοις*,* “with some sweet emollient juices,” that such interwoven lenity may procure access for your admonitions, and effect your desired issue. The quality of the offence, and the various aggravations of it, must state† the quantity, measure, and duration of thine anger. Great faults, if repeated, deserve a greater arduency of spirit. Consider, likewise, the station and place of thy several relations. A wife ought not to be rebuked before children and servants, lest her subordinate authority be diminished. Contempt cast upon the wife will reflect upon the husband at last. Yea, for smaller offences in children and servants, if they be not committed openly, rebuke them apart, and in private. But, above all, take heed thou be not found more severe in reproving faults against thyself, than sins against the great God. “Them that honour me,” saith God to Eli, in the case of his sons, “I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” (1 Sam. ii. 30.) It is a point of excellent wisdom to manage thy family aright in these cases. A pilot may show as much skill and dexterity in [the] steering of a little catch [ketch] or pinnacle of pleasure, as of the vast galleons of Spain. If thou hast cause to be angry, yet let not thy storms run all upon the rocks, but endeavour *ταχως αποφλεγμηναι* μαλλον οξυθυμον ειναι δει τον πατερα η βαρυθυμον,‡ “speedily to cool the inflammation, to abate the fever, and slake the fire of anger. It is better for a father to be often and nimble, than to be heavy and durable, in his wrath.” Wink at infirmities; if not such as are immediately sinful, chide them with frowns, and not with bitter assaults; reserve thy public and sharp reprehensions for open and scandalous offences, for reiterated and repeated transgressions which bear a show of great neglect, if not of some contempt and disdain.

7. *Keep up a constant and vigorous practice of holy duties in thy family.*—“As for me and my house,” says Joshua, “we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua xxiv. 15.) Moses commanded the Israelites to go over the laws and precepts which he had given them from God, in their own families in private among their children. (Deut. vi. 7.) The instructions and exhortations of God’s ministers in public should be repeated at home, and whetted to and again upon the little ones. Samuel had a feast upon the sacrifice in his own house. (1 Sam. ix. 12, 22.) Job and others had sacrifices in their own families. The passover-lamb was to be eaten in every particular house. (Exod. xii. 3, 4.) God says, he will “pour out his fury upon the families that call not upon his name.” There are times that every family must be apart, as well as every wife and person apart. (Zech. xii. 12, 13.) All the males of Abraham’s family were appointed to pass under the ordinance of circumcision. The keeping-up of family-duties makes every little house become a sanctuary,

* PLUTARCHUS, *ibid.* p. 22. GASSEND. in *Epicur.* tom. iii. p. 1611.

† In the old

meaning of *regulate.*—EDIT.

‡ PLUTARCHUS, *ibid.* p. 23.

a Beth-el, a house of God. And here I would advise, that Christians be not over-tedious in their duties of private worship. I have heard from a near relation of that holy man, Mr. Dod, that he gave this counsel, that the constant family-prayers should not ordinarily exceed above a quarter of an hour, if so much. The morning and evening sacrifices at the temple, and the passover-offerings, which were for every family, consisted but of one lamb. Take heed of making the ways of God irksome and unpleasant. If God draw forth thy heart sometimes, do not reject and repress Divine breathings; but usually labour for succinctness and brevity, such as may stand with holy reverence to God, so as not to huddle over excellent and weighty duties; and yet such as may render religious worship desirable in the eyes of those whom thou wouldest have to look towards Canaan. The spirit is willing many times, when the flesh is weak; and a person may better for a little time keep his thoughts from wandering and discomposure, whenas the large expense of expressions gives occasion for too much diversion. "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." (Eccles. v. 2.) When our Lord gave his disciples a form of prayer, which was for quotidian and daily use, as appears by that petition, "Give us *this day* our daily bread;" you know how short and compendious it is. The spirits are like strings of harps and bows, which, if never remitted and slackened, will crack, and make those instruments unserviceable.* It is of good use, likewise, to vary the duties of religion; sometimes sing and sometimes read, sometimes repeat, sometimes catechise, sometimes exhort. *Orationi lectio, lectioni succedat oratio; breve videbitur tempus, quod tantis operum varietatibus occupatur.*† It was the direction of that holy hermit of Bethlehem: "Let reading succeed prayer, and prayer reading: that time will seem short which is exercised with such variety of works." Aristotle observes out of a poet, *Μεταβολή παντων γλυκυτατον, δια πονηριαν*,‡ that "change is a most sweet thing, by reason of our pravity." Indeed, says the philosopher, unto simple natures the same action is most pleasant; and therefore God delights in one and the same simple pleasure. However, let us use the best art we can to draw on our own hearts, as well as [those] of inferiors, to delight more constantly in holy duties. But in two things be principally frequent: the offering up the sacrifice of prayers, and the keeping of children to read daily some portion of holy scriptures; as Jerome counselled *Læta: Reddat tibi pensum quotidie de scripturarum floribus carptum*: § "Let thy child give thee a daily account of some choice flowers cropped out of the Bible."

8. *Endeavour by all good means to draw them to public ordinances.*—For there God is in a more special manner present. "There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." (Psalm cxxxiii. 3.) There he "walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." (Rev. ii. 1.) "While the king sitteth at the table, the spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." (Canticles i. 12.) — He makes the place of his feet to be glorious. Though it were God's appointment that the males only should

* PLUTARCHUS *Περί Παιδων Αγωγης*.

† HIERONYMUS, tom. i. p. 57.

‡ ARISTOTELIS *Ethic.* lib. vii. c. 14.

§ HIERONYMUS, p. 57.

at the solemn feasts repair to Shiloh, yet Elkanah carries up "all his house" to the yearly sacrifice. (1 Sam. i. 21.) He would have his wife, and children, and servants, "to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple:" and you know what a great blessing succeeded upon Hannah. Cornelius also, when Peter came to preach at Cæsarea upon God's immediate command,—he calls together all his kindred and acquaintants* to hear the sermon. (Acts x. 24.) Jesse and his sons came together to the sacrifice which Samuel offered to the Lord at Bethlehem. (1 Sam. xvi. 5.) It is an ungodly, wicked custom to leave many children and servants at home needlessly upon the Lord's day. Indeed, in great and numerous families, where there are many small children that might disturb the congregation, and where much provision is necessary for such as attend upon God in the duties of worship, there the case is somewhat altered; for such works of mercy are dispensed with by God himself. But labour to contract the number of absents to the smallest quantity possible; and let servants take their turns, that none may be always at home: leave none behind thee without necessary and urgent cause. As for such as can be present at ordinances, remember to examine them of what they heard; as our blessed Lord, the grand pattern of our imitation, dealt by his beloved disciples, when he had preached that famous sermon by the sea-side: Jesus asks them, "Have ye understood all those things?" (Matt. xiii. 51.) And when they were alone, and apart from the multitude, then he expounded and explained all things that he taught more fully to them. (Mark iv. 34; ix.)

9. In the next place, *if all these things fore-mentioned will not prevail, but inferiors will still run on in a course of sin, then oughtest thou to repair to paternal correction.*—Now, chastisements must be suited to their age, the temperament of their natures and several dispositions, the various qualities and kinds of their offences. Indulge a pardon sooner to lesser faults upon repentance and sorrow. You must consider, whether their faults proceed from imprudence and weakness, upon what ground and occasion, upon what provocation or seduction. Call to mind their former lives, whether they have fallen seldom and rarely, or often and frequently, into the same sin. Observe whether they appear to be deeply sorrowful, and truly humbled, and readily beg forgiveness of God and you, *cum animo non revertendi*, "with a promise of a new life." In these and the like cases, you must adhibit great diligence and prudence. Due punishment is a part of economical justice; and there must be care had, lest by frequent impunity they and their fellows be hardened in the ways of sin, and grow contumacious against the commandments of God. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." (Prov. xiii. 24; xxiii. 14.) This is an ordinance and appointment of God. "Our fathers corrected us, and we gave them reverence." (Heb. xii. 9.) But let superiors remember, that they must not do this without good and without great cause, and when all other means will not prevail. If it be possible to rule without the rod, it is

* This word has at length become ACQUAINTANCE, on account of euphony.—EDIT.

best. Happy are those parents to whom God hath given such towardly children, that a nod, that a frown, that a wink, will reform them. Certainly the wisdom of parents might do much this way at first. If their children be of any tolerable frames, that the holding-up of a finger may excuse the holding-up the rod, it preserves and endears the affections of children exceedingly. That of the tragedian is a good maxim in economics: *Qui vult regnare diu, languidè regnet manu*: "Durable power is fixed upon gentle management." Take heed of exasperating, and "provoking your children to wrath," (Eph. vi. 4,) by rigid and severe courses, where less may effect your purpose, and that more kindly. There be some cruel parents and masters, that carry themselves more like raging brutes than men, that take pleasure in tyrannical corrections. They can let their children swear, and lie, and filch, and commit any other sin, and yet correct them not. But if they do not what they would have them, then they fall upon them, and tear them like wild beasts. Know, that God will require such vile acts at your hands in the great day. O rather let them see that thou art angry for God's sake, and not for thine own! There must be a great deal of gracious pity to their souls, and holy love, mixed with thine anger against sin. O how few be there that beg in secret, that God would soften the hearts of their relations by their due and moderate castigations! O pray that God would lay his holy hand upon their hearts, when thou layest thy rod upon their backs! After they have paid their debt to justice, look more serenely upon them, and thereby encourage them to amendment. "Morosity and acerbity," *στρυφνοτης*,* if continuing still, will check their hopes of ever returning to thy grace and favour. Let ancient rulers have a care of too much sourness of carriage; for, many times, through the common incidents of age, the philosopher hath observed that they are too proclive to jealousies, suspicions, *επι το χειρον υπολαμβανειν παντα*,† "to interpret all things in the worst sense," and so, possibly, to be too quick and ready, upon easy suggestions, to think of and deal hardly with their inferiors. Be careful to use both your ears, and hearken to both parties in matters of complaint. But if, upon deliberate and mature conviction, nothing less will prevail, follow God's command herein, and "thy son shall give rest unto thy soul." (Prov. xxix. 17.) In all these cases there lies a great point of prudence, to let them know, that thou hast yet greater corrections for them, if they mend not; that the fear and terror of what thou hast yet reserved may work them to a compliance. They that show the utmost of their rigour and power in such acts at once, despoil themselves of that authority and awe which otherwise they might ingenerate in their hearts; but take heed of all violent and passionate corrections. A Heathen could say to his servant: *Cæderem te nisi irascerer*: ‡ "I would beat thee, were I not angry." He that smites when his passion boils, is too, too subject to transcend the limits of moderation; vehement anger makes the hands to tremble, [so] that such are not able to strike aright. Take heed lest thou make thy child or thy servant to become vile in thine own eyes by too many stripes. (Deut.

* ARISTOTELIS *Ethic.* lib. viii. c. 6.
De Irâ, lib. 1, c. 15.

† *Idem in Rhetoric.* lib. ii. c. 12.

‡ SENECA

xv. 3.) Such persons plant quicksets in the hearts of their children, that may grow up too fast to prick their own hands (yea, their hearts) another day.

10. *If the fore-mentioned means, through Divine blessing, prove effectual, then praise and encourage them, when they come on, though yet but a little.*—Ingenuous, yea, rugged tempers are sometimes wrought upon by moderate and prudent euges. It is spoken of God himself, that “he will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.” (Psalm ciii. 9.) As magistrates, so parents, must be sometimes praisers of them that do well. (Rom. xiii. 3.) Our Lord comes in sometimes with, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matt. xxv. 21.) So must you, when they are towardly and dutiful, *ανακαλῆσαι τοῖς πνεύμασι*, “call up their spirits by commendation.” *Laudibus excitandum est ingenium*:* “There is a notable virtue in praise, especially as to generous spirits, to excite” and prick them forward to duty; and that principally when divers together, according as deserts vary, are unequally praised: it stirs up a virtuous emulation. Only take heed of exceeding too much; for little vessels can bear no great sails. Pride and arrogancy are, many times, nursed up by too exuberant and lavish expressions, and sometimes an unmannerly familiarity appears.

11. *Do they flourish and thrive in duty and obedience, and begin to take in precepts freely and kindly? then win them on further by rewards, according to their several capacities, and the quality of thine own estate.*—God is pleased most graciously to draw and allure us on in the ways of holiness, by the proposal of reward: “He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. xi. 6.) I remember that Jerome, as to the green years of Pacatula, wishes her father to use these means: *Propinantur ei crustula, mulsæ præmia, et quicquid gustu suave est; quod vernat in floribus, quod rutilat in gemmis, quod blanditur in pupis, acceptura festinet, &c.; psalmos mercede decantet.*† “Give her sweetmeats, flowers, jewels, babies, to entice her to learn the psalms.” As to years of further growth, such rewards as become them may be more proper. In some cases, these have proved great spurs and incitations, at least to the outward work of religion in younger ones. Hannah, that good woman, brought up a little coat every year to her son Samuel, when he was in the service of the Lord at the tabernacle in Shiloh, under Eli. (1 Sam. ii. 19.) And you know the father of the prodigal in the parable, when his son returned home to lead a new life,—he killed a fatted calf for him, put the best robe upon his back, a ring upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet. (Luke xv. 22.)

12. In the last place, *be exceeding conscientious and cautelous in disposing them abroad, when either their education or profession requires it.*—As to the schools, when young and tender, choose out such guides and masters as may edify them, and imprint something more of God upon their hearts. It is a great fault in many that take up any neighbour-school where there are profane and wicked children, such as have learnt of their parents to swear, and take God’s name in vain. Many times little youths gather a great deal of filth, and soil, and pollution in

* HIERONYMUS *ad Letam*, p. 55. † *Idem*, p. 100.

such places, that sticks by them many years after. It is a good work, *απελαυνειν απο των ακουσματων και των δραματων ανελευθεριας*,* “to prohibit and keep them off from all illiberal and sordid speeches and spectacles.” There was, it seems, a great crew of naughty children at Bethel, in the days of Elijah, that mocked the prophet,—a place that was a seminary and nursery for young ones in knowledge. (2 Kings ii. 3, 23.) O how sad is it for children that have been diligently taught at home in the fear of God, to unlearn all in wicked schools! Have a great eye to this, and especially if they be such as are designed for academical learning, that they be placed under godly tutors at the university; or if for trades, or other mechanical mysteries, that you choose out the blessed shadow of a godly master and mistress, that may rivet and clench the nail that thou hast knocked in. Great will be thy comfort in this, if thou soughtest more a pious family than a great and rich trade; a family wherein ships go to heaven, and a trade is driven to Canaan: but especially in the grand concernment of marriage, that they match into a godly family, in whose veins the blood of the covenant doth run. An heiress of the Divine promises is a greater match than an empress, of the whole world. He that hath but one foot of land in Mount Zion is richer than he that holds a sceptre over the round globe.

I come now to the second branch of this question, and that is,—

QUESTION II. *By what means may we attain our desires in reference to a good work in the hearts of those that are our equals, whether of consanguinity, affinity, or neighbourhood?*

ANSWER. As to this, I shall only propose two particular rules, which I cannot now handle largely:—

1. *Be diligent in private conference and admonition, as the providence of God shall administer seasonable occasions.*—“Give attendance to exhortation.” (1 Tim. iv. 13.) “Exhorting one another.” (Heb. x. 25.) Lay before them the weighty and momentous matters of eternity and another world. Such things will make deep wounds, to be cured in time by the hand of Heaven. Be short and nervous; and lead them off from carnal discourse, by some sweet and heavenly diversions.

2. *Manage your reproofs with great prudence and discretion.*—“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.” (Lev. xix. 17.) I might here divert into a case almost co-incident; and that is,

QUESTION. *When is it our duty to reprove such as we see and hear committing of sin as we pass by in the streets?*

ANSWER. This being the business of another subject, I shall only say thus much,—that, if thou perceivest them (by their haughty and scornful carriage) to be such as will kick at rebuke, thou hast a rule from Solomon: “Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.” (Prov. ix. 8.) When, by the wisest conjecture that thou canst make, he is like to show the properties of a brutish, swinish nature, “Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” (Matt. vii. 6.) But if he be a person likely to receive impressions, and particularly if it be a trespass against thyself, go and tell him his

* ARISTOTELIS *Polit.* lib. vii. c. 17.

fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." (Matt. xviii. 15.) "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself." (Prov. xxv. 9.) I have known admirable success in this case. But in all such cases observe these three directions :—

1. *Time your reproofs seasonably.*—"Words spoken in season are like apples of gold in pictures of silver." (Prov. xxv. 11.) *Αυτο τουτο μαλιστα φιλοσοφιας ιδιον, το καιρον εκαστων εκιστασθαι** "This very point," says an ancient, "is proper to a philosopher, to understand the season of all things." I may say, it is much more the excellency of a Christian to feel the pulse of the soul, and hit the disease in the very joint ; as it is reported of Galen, that when Antoninus laboured under a distemper, others not being able to declare where it lay, this physician, by his expertness in the evidence of symptoms, pronounced that his stomach was vexed with crudities and indigestion. The emperor cried out three times : *Αυτο εστιν, αυτο τουτο, ο ειπες εστιν.*† "That is it ! that very thing is it, which thou hast spoken." As to our purposes, it is advisable, sometimes, not presently and immediately to fall bluntly upon the work, lest thou thyself shouldst be in a passion ; yet stay not too long, lest thy holy zeal be cooled, and both thou and he forget or dissemble the circumstances whereby reproof might be the better fixed. A seasonable time to intermeddle in these cases may be when a friend is under the holy hand of God in any affliction, particularly in a sick-bed. That time which is fit for bodily- may be much more fit for soul-physic ; when thoughts of mortality, and the leaving of all outward enjoyments, do prepare and meliorate the way for spiritual impressions.

2. *Mix thy reproofs with meek and gentle expressions.*—Every reproof should be like the *syrupus acetosus* of physicians, "the syrup of vinegar," that carries with it a grateful sharpness. Take heed thou go not to this work vested in thine own anger ; for though there may be in thee some holy zeal, yet take heed of mingling too much of kitchen-fire. Meek reproofs are like tents dipped in the Balm of Gilead, that both search and cure the wound together. "Let the righteous smite me," says David ; "it shall be a kindness : and let him reprove me ; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (Psalm cxli. 5.) Such are the disciples of the Good Samaritan, who poured-in wine as an abster-sive, and oil as a suppling incarnative, into the wound. (Luke x. 34.) Such are the children of that prudent matron, who "opened her mouth in wisdom, and in whose tongue was the law of kindness." (Prov. xxxi. 26.) And yet, friends, if we be over-gentle, the core of the wound will remain. The surgeon who hath taught his fingers too much tenderness, and not willing to put his patient to pain, may, through cruel kindness, occasion distorted limbs and lameness all a man's life. Corrosives are as necessary as glutinous plasters, to eat down the proud flesh of our sinful sores. Eli's sinful mildness procured the sharp sword of the Philistines to cut off his sons ; and occasioned such dismal events, that broke his own heart, and his neck too. In many chemical operations, salt is a most necessary ingredient, and causes things to ferment : without the salt of reproof, in its due proportion, bare words of advice will

* *DIODEGENES LAERTIUS in Arcesilao.*

† *CASTELLANUS De Vit. Medic. p. 117.*

seldom work. The temper of the person must be wisely considered. In some, too mild expressions lull them asleep in sin. "No great matter," may they think, "which extorts but such gentle reflections." In others, that are quick and apprehensive, soft words do pacify wrath. (Prov. xv. 1.) Such as are of choleric tempers, whose gall doth much overflow their intestines, physicians are more careful of their *χολαγωγγα*, of "such ingredients in their purges that may exonerate, and not augment, their choler." In all thy spiritual physic, labour to clear it up, that thou givest no potion but what may tend to the health of his soul.

3. *Be sure thou be unblamable as to that which thou reprovest in another.*—If thou doest the same things for which thou rebukest thy brother, "thou art inexcusable: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself." (Rom. ii. 1.) He may well retort the proverb upon thee, "Physician, heal thyself." "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." (Luke vi. 42.) This is the first and principal work, *σαυτον πεισαι, και ουτω πεπεικας, ειτα μοι νυν επιχειρεις πειθειν τους αλλους*;* "to persuade thyself. Dost thou attempt to persuade others to that whereunto thou art not arrived thyself?" O vain man! who will believe that thou art in good earnest, that thou dost indeed "abhor idols," whenas thou "committest sacrilege?" (Rom. ii. 22.)

OBJECTION. But some may object: "Shall we never reprove others in any case, till we are clear ourselves? Then who can perform this duty?"

ANSWER. I answer: As to scandalous sins, and such as grossly foul the conversation; a man through grace may "keep himself unspotted from the world." (James i. 27.) But in matters of infirmity, who can say that his heart or his life is free and clean? In the former, when thou hast washed thy hands in innocency, then mayest thou deal with thy brother. In the latter, since "in many things we offend all," (James iii. 2,) involve thyself in the same reproof, and it may be digested the more kindly.

I come now to the third and last branch of the question; and that is,

QUESTION III. *How shall we deal with superiors, in case such are in the state of nature? By what means may we most effectually promote their conversion?*

1. Here I might enlarge, by way of preface, to show that it is lawful in some cases for inferiors to deal with superiors, though it be the most difficult task.

2. *That it is not only lawful, but sometimes necessary.*—For it may so fall out, that in a whole family there may be but one child, or one servant, that truly fears God; as it was with Joseph in the house of Potiphar. What shall he do, that would fain win a father, a master, or any other superior, unto God? As to this, I shall give-in but two directions at present.

ANSWER 1. *Exhibit thy counsel, advice, or reproof, under the veils of similitudes, examples, or histories.*—Diogenes Laertius, in the Life of Zeno, acquaints us: *Ειδη τινα επικοπτοι, περισταλμενωσ και ουκ αδην, αλλα*

* ARRIANUS in *Epictet.* lib. iv. c. 6.

προβρῶθεν * that "if he did reprehend any, he did it succinctly, not profusely, but at some distance." It is a good rule as to superiors. It is an elegant and a profitable way for managing this necessary duty, though usually ineffectual and unsuccessful, for want of vigilant circumspection and prudence. If thy father be ungodly and unholy, recite some history out of the Bible, or out of church-writers, that may have a sweet reflection upon thy father's way. Sometimes parables and proverbial speeches that are modest and sober, may hit the joint. He may vouchsafe to behold his face in this glass, who would storm at direct reproof. Parents many times, when they are hit thus meekly and modestly, if they be wise, will seem to take no notice, but may ponder upon it a great while after; as our Lord when he told his parents that he was about his Father's business, the text says that Mary "kept all those sayings in her heart." (Luke ii. 51.) This is drawing the bow, as it may seem to the superior many times, at an adventure; yet may thine arrow hap to pierce even within the joints of the harness. Parables are feigned examples, and are ὁμοια επαγωγῆ, "near akin to inductions:" such was the great wisdom of Æsop and Stesichorus in their days, as the philosopher notes.† Such was the parable of Jotham to the men of Shechem. (Judges ix. 7, &c.) Thus Nathan dealt with David; (2 Sam. xii. 1, &c.) and our blessed Lord himself after this manner many times handled the high priests and rulers of the people; he reproveth them sometimes in dark sentences, and chosen parables. But if superiors be over-morose, and exceeding sagacious, and highly magisterial, then a disapproving silence, a disrelishing look," as speedy a departure out of their presence as may stand with the necessary detentions of thy duty: (2 Thess. iii. 14:) ἀποσιωπησαι, και ερυθριασαι, και σκυθρωπησαι, δηλος γινου δυσχεραινειν τῷ λογῶ.‡ a holy blush for them that are shameless in sin, may do greater things than thou art aware of.

2. *Manage all your discourses with reverent expressions and compellations.*—If it be a great part of common humanity, προσαιγορευειν και χαριεντιζειν,§ "to salute courteously those that we meet;" what dexterous affability, and most sweet lowly demeanour, should we exert and put forth to those above us! Paul, in his conference with Porcius Festus, salutes him with great respect: "Most noble Festus, I speak forth the words of truth and soberness." (Acts xvi. 25.) Grace expels not the due distance of nature. "Rebuke not an elder," says the apostle, "but intreat him as a father," (1 Tim. v. 1,) that he may see thou desirest, and longest, that he may be begotten to God. Mark how Naaman's servants treated their master; with what submissive reverence did they bespeak him in that matter of his washing in Jordan: "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?" &c. (2 Kings v. 13.) Abraham hearkened, you know, to the voice of his wife, at the command of God, in the case of

* DIOGENES LAERTIUS in *Zenone*, p. 445. Editio Genev. † ARISTOTELIS *Rhetoric*. lib. ii. c. 20. ‡ EPICTETUS, cap. lv. "Approaches to indecent discourse are likewise dangerous. Whenever, therefore, any thing of this sort happens, if there be a proper opportunity, rebuke him who makes advances that way: or, at least, by silence, and blushing, and a forbidding look, show yourself to be displeas'd with such talk."—MAS. CARTER'S Translation. § DIOGENES LAERTIUS in *Platone*, p. 245.

Hagar ; and the Spirit of God takes notice of the temper of Sarah, and commends her for it, that she called her husband "lord." (Gen. xxi. 12 ; 1 Peter iii. 6.) And, that I may give an instance in all three relations, if we consult the circumstances of the text, we shall find it probable, that Terah the father hearkened to Abraham his son, as to his departure out of an idolatrous country. For the voice of God came to Abraham alone, bidding him to go out of Ur of the Chaldees, to a land that he would show him. (Gen. xi. 31 ; xii. 1 ; Joshua xxiv. 2.) Nebuchadnezzar, that great and mighty monarch, did not reject that pious and savoury counsel which was given him by Daniel, his captive-servant within his palace. (Dan. iv. 27.) Job, likewise, a man of great possessions in the east, did not "despise the cause of his man-servant or of his maid-servant, when they contended with him." (Job xxxi. 13.) Humble, modest, and reverent behaviour may have notable influence into superiors. It is controverted by Seneca, whether or no a child may not heap greater benefits upon a father than he had received from him.* It may be clearly stated in the affirmative, if he should be a means of turning him unto God. The father begets his son to a miserable and mortal life : the son begets his father to that life which is glorious and eternal.

There remain yet four general directions respecting all relations.

1. *Insinuate thyself into their affections.*—Let them know that thou hast no design upon them but to make them happy. Endeavour to persuade them that thou hast no private end, only their everlasting good. Wind into their hearts, screw thyself into their affections, and thou hast done half thy work. 'Ο δ' ερωσ ουδενι ουτως πολεμει ως αναγκη και δεσι† "Nothing [is] so inimical to love as fear and necessity." When all jealousies of any sinister ends are blown away, then exhortations and counsels go down comfortably. When persons are convinced and satisfied, that in all our applications we study their benefit and profit, this opens an effectual door to all the means that we shall use. Thus the apostle accosts the Romans : "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." (Rom. i. 11.) Thus he facilitates his way to the Philippians : "God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 8.) Τους το δοκουν συμφερον ποριζοντας εκεινους και τιμαν, και σεβειν, πεφυκαμεν ‡ "We do even naturally respect and reverence such as bring that which appears profitable to us ;" especially when superiors carry themselves with courteousness and kindness. For most men delight to be honoured and esteemed by them that are above them, δια την ελπιδα,§ "for the hope that they conceive of some special profit to be received from them." The case varies not in spiritual matters. Labour, then, to gain their love, their good esteem, and the work will thrive beyond expectation.

2. *Study to convince them by rational arguments.*—Ηπειθα συζυγια ερωτος και λογου : || "Persuasion is the daughter of love and reason." Our affections, indeed, most times are first wrought upon, we are so sensual by nature. When thou art once gotten into their hearts, then

* SENeca *De Benefic.* lib. iii. c. 35. † MAXIMUS TYRIUS, *Dissert.* 10. Editio Heinsii, 1607. ‡ SIMPLICIUS in *Epictetum*, c. xxxviii. p. 217. Edit. Salm. § ARISTOTELIS *Ethic.* lib. viii. c. 8. || MAXIMUS TYRIUS, *Diss.* x.

press them with weighty arguments drawn out of scripture; argue with them about the folly of sin. See how Job handles the matter with his wife about murmuring and impatience against God: "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job ii. 10.) Let them know that all the ways of God are pleasant ways, and all his paths are peace; (Prov. iii. 17;) that the path to heaven is a most sweet path to walk in. Show them the beauty of Christ, the glory of Christ. Draw aside the curtain, and unveil the mysteries of free grace before their eyes. Let them behold the image of that blessed Saviour portrayed in scripture. As the spouse did to the daughters of Jerusalem, run over all the excellencies of Christ; and then conclude, "He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." (Canticles v. 16.) Tell them what experience you had of the blindness, nakedness, miserableness, of your own condition formerly, when you were as they are now; that you then thought of religion as they do,—that it was but a pceevish, foolish, unnecessary strictness. Tell them how the case is mended with you; how admirably, through mercy, it is altered.

3. *Let your conversation be very exemplary; so that what you persuade may be strongly confirmed by your own example.*—Both vice and virtue are learned by precedents. Alexander, in his manners and gait, did imitate his master Leonides, as long as he lived. *Nihil in te et in patre suo videat quod si fecerit peccet:** "Let thy child behold nothing in thy walking which, if followed, may prove sinful." Be an example to others of holiness, that they may not offend by the authority of thy name.† Though thy precepts be short and concise, let thine actions, exemplifying those precepts, be constant and perpetual.‡ Deny yourselves sometimes in the enjoyment of lawful things, which may not be expedient before carnal relations, when you are upon this work. Let wives, says the apostle Peter, win their husbands by their holy conversation. (1 Peter iii. 1, 2.) Walk so meekly, so obediently, so winningly by an amiable deportment, that a wicked, drunken husband may see the picture of grace in the life of a wife, and may be forced to confess, that grace of a truth dwelleth in her. Many times the unbelieving husband may be saved, even in this sense, by the believing wife, *et vice versa*. (1 Cor. vii. 16.) David professed that he would "walk within his house with a perfect heart." (Psalm ci. 2.) As the water follows the finger in the clay; so may thy example lead them on to the things of God. There is a secret reverence and awe upon the hearts of others, when any in the family do walk worthy of the gospel unto all well-pleasing.

4. And lastly: after thou hast used all these fore-mentioned directions,—which lie couched in the bowels of these words in the text: "My heart's desire is, that Israel may be saved:" for if he did heartily desire their good, as he professed, then he would use all good means proper and proportionable to that end. But then he adds his "prayer to God" for the same purpose: and so must thou,—*follow the example of our holy apostle*. Alas! all thy instructions without prayer will do no good. Go

* HIERONYMUS *ad Latam*, pp. 56, 57.
Diss. xv.

† *Idem*, p. 101.

‡ MAXIMUS TYRIUS;

to God to sanctify all, and to persuade their souls that you have a most single and sincere aim at their everlasting salvation. Pray apart for them; and, if the condition of thy relations will admit, pray with them; and therein couch * some sweet reflections upon their souls. Elijah, when he was in prayer with company, cries out, "O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God." (1 Kings xviii. 37.) Our blessed Lord also, in that heavenly prayer to the Father, makes most sweet and ardent mention of his disciples who were present with him. (John xvii. 20; xviii. 1.) Job,—he sacrificed for his children, he sent for them, and sanctified them, and "offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all;" (Job i. 5;) to teach us to pray for children distinctly one by one. Abraham,—he begs of God, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen. xvii. 18;) and Bathsheba,—she calls Solomon "the son of her vows." (Prov. xxxi. 2.) Austin was the child of Monica's prayers and tears. Ask counsel of God, as Manoah did, that he would be pleased to teach you what you must do with your children. (Judges xiii. 8.) Beg of God wisdom and direction, that he would order providential seasons for their good. Let that be your great request in secret: "O that such a child, such a servant, might be pulled as a firebrand out of the fire, (Jude 23,) and brought home to God." Should you have the wisdom of angels, if God do not come in to your help, all your labour will be in vain. Cry out with the poor man in the gospel, "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water;" (Matt. xvii. 15;) sometimes into one sin, sometimes into another, whereby his soul incurs fearful and terrible dangers. Commend thy child to God, whom thou hast begotten to death and damnation, unless wonderful mercy interpose itself. Sprinkle him with the holy water of melting tears, beg of God that he may be delivered from the wrath to come by his almighty arm. Petition earnestly for the pardon of those sins, for the rooting-out [of] that spiritual wickedness, which thou hast been the means to propagate. Pray it out, fast it out, weep it out before God. Such devils go not out without fasting and prayer.

Now I shall make some brief application of the whole, and so conclude.

USES.

1. In the first place, *hence we learn the diffusive nature of holiness.*—It is like the widow's oil, that filled all the vessels of her neighbours. (2 Kings iv. 3.) He that is holy, is *θεοειδης*, "like unto God himself" for communicativeness, as well as for purity, in his small degree and measure. The language of a saint is, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us come before his presence with thanksgiving." (Psalm xc. 1, 2.) "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways," &c. (Isai. ii. 3.)

2. [*We learn*] *to reprove such as do not perform their utmost, that do not improve their skill and endeavour to the height, in this excellent work.*

* The third and fourth editions have *touch* in this place.—EDIT.

—Every child is born an heir of hell; and wilt thou use no means to deliver his soul from death, and to pull him out of the jaws of the devil? O thou ungodly father, that, like Gallio, takest no care in this matter! God will require the blood of thy child, and the blood of thy servant, at thy hands one day. Dost thou love thy child? A Heathen will teach thee thy duty: “To love,” saith he, “is βουλευσθαι αγαθα και το κατα δυναμιν πρακτικον ειναι,* “to desire good things for such, and, according to the utmost ability, to endeavour to accomplish them.” There is but one good thing that is absolutely necessary for thy child; and that is, a happy union to God. What hast thou yet done to the effecting of that? Many are eagerly bent upon those designs,—how their children, like Caligula in the historian, may tumble in a room full of gold;† but take little pains for “the gold of Ophir,” and that wisdom which is “far above rubies.” (Prov. iii. 14, 15.) Know, that all the sins of relations under your charge that are not reprovèd and corrected for, will become yours. Every drunken fit of thy servant will be counted thine to answer for. Every turn of pleasure that thy children and servants take in the fields upon God’s holy day, with thy approving connivance, will turn to thy account at the great tribunal. (Isai. lviii. 13; 2 John 11.) If thou wouldest find favour with God, labour to divert them from the ways that lead to the chambers of death. He that neglects his duty herein, does what in him lies to damn his child and himself too. As if he were in league with death, in covenant with Satan, and with hell were at an agreement; (Isai. xxviii. 15;) as if it were a laughing matter, for himself and all his relations to fall into the bottomless pit of fire and brimstone! O how many families are the filthy cages of unclean birds, like so many hog-sties and sinks of all manner of abominations! We can scarce walk the streets, but we shall hear swearing, and cursing, and polluting God’s holy name, and many obscene and filthy speeches, and see great wickedness committed, even by young striplings: and this is because they are not instructed and taught the fear of the Lord at home by their parents and rulers. There be many ruffling gallants in our times, that look upon holiness as a crime, and count it their bravery to go towards hell with open mouth, with a full swinge, that swim down the rivers of riot and luxury into the Dead Sea; (2 Peter ii. 3, 13;) that are so far from reprovèd others for sin, that they commend and encourage them rather; that have much ado to bear with servants that perform excellent service, if they will not drink healths, and be debauched as well as themselves, more like Nero ‡ than Christians. (1 Peter iv. 4.) If their children serve Satan never so much, they matter it not; so they do not ruin their patrimony. No wonder that their children be profligate and vile, that have such sad examples. The Spirit of God takes notice, that Ahaziah was a wicked man, and gives this for the reason: “His mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.” (2 Chron. xxii. 3.) Such as will be angry rather, if their relations do not walk in the ways of sin, [are] like the wasps, in the naturalist, § that dip their stings in the poison of vipers. Their angry tongues are tintured

* ARISTOTELIS *Ethic.* lib. ii. cap. 4.

† SUTTONIUS in *Caligula*, cap. 42.

‡ SUTTONIUS in *Nerone*, cap. 5.

§ ÆLIANUS *De Animal.* lib. v. cap. 16.

in the venom of sin. (Rom. iii. 13.) O how much good might a Theophilus do! When greatness and holiness run in a blood, how would the generations to come rise up and bless them! how much honour might they bring to God! how would religion flourish! how would our fields bring forth peace, and our streets run down with rivers of righteousness!

3. *Hence we learn the horrible sin of such that cause others to do wickedly.*—That egg on others to the commission of sin, that encourage children to profane the sabbath, to lie, and swear, and seem to approve of, delight, and rejoice in it: “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” (Rom. i. 32.)

4. *Hence we may infer, what great wisdom is requisite in managing those means that are proper and useful in order to the salvation of our relations.*—“What integrity of heart, what sincerity, what holy contempt of the scorns of this wicked world!” “Dost thou take upon thee the study of wisdom?” says the Stoic, “prepare thyself speedily,” *ὦς καταγελασθησομενος*,* “to be laughed to scorn, and expect that many should mock at thee.” How much greater is the depravation of men’s hearts since the fall, in opposition to true holiness! Many a bitter taunt and scoff must thou go under; but in wisdom pass it by, regard it not: you work for souls. One soul begotten to God is better than the gaining of whole kingdoms and empires.

5. *To such as live under holy rulers and governors of families, that you would highly esteem them for their labour of love.*—That you would count it a singular mercy that God hath given any of you a holy father, or a holy mother, such as have spent many an hour in secret for thy good, that have sought it earnestly at the throne of grace, that thy life might be hid with God in Christ. Look upon their instructions as so many pearls, their reproofs as so many rubies, to wear about thy neck. (Prov. i. 9.) Not to be reprov’d in the way of sin, is a great judgment. To have these thorns and briers cast in the way to our sinful lovers, is a great mercy. (Hosca ii. 6.) O how many blessings do children enjoy by means of praying parents! Count it a great and an admirable favour from God.

6. *To such as are employed and exercised in this excellent duty and study, to perform it conscientiously.*—Who seriously endeavour, that their yoke-fellows may be the spouses of Christ, their posterity the children of our heavenly Father, their servants the freemen of Christ, their kindred of the blood-royal of heaven. Let me say, as our blessed Lord to Zaccheus, “This day is salvation come to this house.” This day hast thou fellowship with the Father and with the Son. The God of heaven goes along with thee. Though thou dost not see the desired fruit of thy labour at present, do not despond, the work is God’s. It is like to some of those seeds, which, sown in the earth, will not come up till the second spring. “The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.” (James v. 7.) It is often seen that there is a mighty

* EPICTETUS, cap. 29.

power of God going along with such constant endeavours; at length the diligent hand may make thee rich. The grace that dwelt in the grandmother Lois, in the mother Eunice, dwelt afterward in their little son Timothy. (2 Tim. i. 5.) Though God is not tied by any bond of nature, yet fervent prayer is of a high esteem in the sight of God. The use of means directed by God, is a hopeful sign of mercy intended: where God chooseth to the end, he ordains to the means. He hath chosen us to be holy, that we might be glorious. (Eph. i. 4, 11.) However God deal with you in that particular request, yet be sure your care and pains will not lose a signal reward. Your prayers shall return into your own bosom; and, I tell thee, God watcheth over such a family in a way of mercy and peace. His eye of grace is toward thee; his holy hand will uphold thee; his heart will bless thee. Unto his good pleasure commit thyself, and wait the success; go on and prosper, thou blessed of the Lord.

SERMON IX.

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WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERS OF A SOUL'S SINCERE LOVE TO CHRIST? AND HOW MAY THAT LOVE TO HIM BE KINDLED AND INFLAMED?

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.—
Ephesians vi. 24.

THESE words may well be treated on without much preface, there being nothing in them which speaks any dependence upon or connexion with any thing that went before. Some form of benediction we find used by this great apostle, at the conclusion of every epistle; (Rom. xvi. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 23, 24; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Gal. vi. 18;) and accordingly, having driven his excellent design, in this to the church of Ephesus, to a full period or issue, he first makes an affectionate address to God, and to the Mediator, in their behalf: "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;"

* The name of the author of each sermon in this volume was not given till the publication of the fourth edition in 1677, some years prior to the death of the learned editor, Dr. Samuel Annesley. In that edition the author of the ninth sermon is printed MR. NEST. But in that age, amazing variations were discernible in writing the names of individuals; a defect for which Dr. Edmund Calamy endeavoured to find a remedy in reference to the Nonconformists in 1727, by the publication of his celebrated "Continuation of the Account of silenced Ministers," &c. As, however, neither he, nor any other Dissenting historian, has, in the enumeration of Christopher Nesse's works, mentioned this sermon as a part of them, I should have felt some hesitation in ascribing its authorship to him, had not the peculiarities of NESSE'S style been impressed on the whole discourse, in characters too palpable to be mistaken.—EDIT.