

remember the covenant sealed in baptism, that you may keep-up your faith in God through Christ, who pardoneth all your sins, and hath "begotten us again unto a lively hope." We must expect to be tempted: the devil tempted Christ after his baptism to question his filiation so solemnly attested. (Compare Matt. iii. 17 with Matt. iv. 6.) Luther saith of himself, that when the devil tempted him to despair, or to any doubts and fears about the love of God or his mercy to sinners, he would always answer, *Ecce, ego baptizatus sum, et credo in Christum crucifixum*: "Behold, I am baptized, and believe in Christ crucified." And he telleth us also of a holy virgin, who gave this reply, when the devil abused her solitudes, and injected any despairing thoughts into her mind, *Baptizata sum*, "I am baptized, and entered into God's covenant, and will expect the pardon of my sins by Jesus Christ."

Thus should we all the days of our life improve our baptism, till we have the full of that holy and happy estate, for which we were first purified and washed in God's laver.

SERMON XI.

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BY WHAT SCRIPTURAL RULES MAY CATECHISING BE SO MANAGED,
AS THAT IT MAY BECOME MOST UNIVERSALLY PROFITABLE?

"*Train up,*" or *catechise,* "*a child in the way he should go,*" or *in his way:*
"*and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*"—Proverbs xxii. 6.

THIS most excellent book of sacred aphorisms, or divine proverbs, is by some not unfitly compared to a costly chain of orient pearls; among which, though there be a fair connexion, yet there is little or no coherence. I shall therefore immediately enter on the words themselves; and in them I observe a *precept* and a *promise*; an *important duty*, and a *persuasive motive*.

1. *A grand, important, necessary duty enjoined.*—"Train up," or *catechise,* "*a child in the way he should go.*" In which words we have,

(1.) *The act or duty prescribed.*—"Train up," or *catechise*; piously and prudently instruct and educate.

(2.) *The object or person that is to be trained up.*—"A child." By a synecdoche, all such younger ones and inferiors as are committed to the care and conduct of their superiors.

(3.) *The subject-matter wherein these inferiors are thus to be trained up.*—"In the way he should go," in that way or manner of life which most suits and becomes him, that makes most for God's glory and his own temporal, spiritual, and eternal good.

2. *A cogent argument or prevalent motive to excite and quicken to the faithful discharge of this important duty.*—"And when he is old, he will

not depart from it;”* that is, not easily, not ordinarily depart from it. He will be the better for it as long as he lives.†

From the first of these, namely, the precept that enjoins the duty, I infer, **OBSERVATION.** *That it is the great and indispensable duty, and therefore ought to be the serious and constant care, of superiors, prudently and piously to train up or catechise, to instruct and educate, all such inferiors as are committed to their care and conduct.*

In the pursuing of this momentous truth, I shall tread in this method, laying before you these five things:—

I. *What it is to train up or catechise.*

II. *What is meant by that “way,” wherein persons are to be trained up.*

III. *Who they are, that are to be trained up or catechised.*

IV. *Who they are, that are to train up or catechise, and why.*

V. *How the whole affair may be so prudently, piously, spiritually managed, as that it may be crowned with such a blessed success, as to become most universally profitable.*

I. *What it is to train up or catechise.*

SOLUTION. The word הַנְּחִיף in the text is very pregnant, and greatly significant: *Primùm imbue*; “Give the first dip, dye, tincture, seasoning.” Hence, by a metaphor, the word is diversely translated. *Initia*; so Arias Montanus: “Begin, or give the first instruction; lay the groundwork, foundation, or first stone.” *Deduc*: So [the] Chaldee Paraph. Version. *Instrue*: “Set in order or array, arm, train up, instruct.” Thus Abraham armed, or led forth his “trained” or “instructed servants.” (Gen. xiv. 14.) § The word is also translated, *dedicavit, consecravit*; that is, “to set a person or thing apart, and to devote it to the true God in a right manner, for holy uses and ends, with solemn prayer and praise.” Thus the word הַנְּחִיף is used, Deut. xx. 5; in the title of Psalm xxx.; 1 Kings ix. 7; 2 Chron. vii. 5; 1 Kings viii. 63; 1 Chron. xviii. 11. The Greeks render the word $\mu\sigma\tau\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\epsilon\iota$, $\sigma\pi\omicron\upsilon\alpha\iota\delta\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\epsilon$, $\kappa\alpha\tau\eta\chi\iota\zeta\epsilon$: [which last is] a word of a peculiar signification, and imports a plain and familiar teaching and instructing of the ignorant by word of mouth, in the first grounds and fundamental principles of the true, and (in the strictest sense) the Christian, religion. || Thus the word is used, Luke i. 4; Acts xviii. 25; 1 Cor. xiv. 19; Gal. vi. 6. Hence it may be supposed it was that our translators, in the margin, render the word “catechise,” as being prompted thereunto by the Jewish rabbins, who style their form of catechism סֵפֶר הַנְּחִיף “a book of first instruction.”

II. *What is meant by that “way” wherein persons are to be trained up, or catechised and initiated.*

SOLUTION. עַל־פִּי דְרָבּוֹ “In the way he should go;” in the way or

* *Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem*

Testa diu.—HORATII *Epist.* lib. i. Ep. ii. 69.

“Now suck-in wisdom: for the vessel well

With liquor season’d, long retains the smell.”—FRANCIS’S Translation.

† *Ad plurimum.*—So HILDERSHAM. † הַנְּחִיף *Initia, primùm imbue, institue,*

dedica.—BUXTORF. “Initiate, early imbue, instruct, dedicate.”—EDIT. § הַנְּחִיף

Instructos, expeditos, incipientes suos pueros, fidos, initiatos, quos domi nutriverat, et quos arte bellicâ et lege Divinâ instruxerat. “Instructed, equipped, his rising young men, who were trustworthily, initiated, whom he had cherished and brought up in his house, and whom he had instructed in the art of war, and in the law of the Lord.”—EDIT. || Whether by way of question and answer.—*vide* page 105.

manner of his life, (Gen. xliii. 7,) *in viâ sud*, "in his way," in his kind, and according to his capacity and measure, and suitably to the weakness and tenderness of his years; * in the sound knowledge and practice of those truths and principles which may fit him for the service of his God and generation here, and for the eternal enjoyment of his God hereafter. Let Paul interpret Solomon in his "way." 1. "In the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" (Eph. vi. 4;) *εν παιδεια*, that is, in all profitable instruction suitable to a child's age and state, for the framing and moulding of him by knowledge unto a commendable and virtuous carriage, and for the doing of greater good in human society when he comes to write himself MAN. 2. But especially in religious instruction, in "instruction in righteousness;" (2 Tim. iii. 16;) "in the words of faith and of good doctrine;" (1 Tim. iv. 6;) "the first principles of the oracles of God, and of the doctrine of Christ." (Heb. v. 12; vi. 1.) There is something more yet in the words: אֶפְ-לִי *Ad os, supra os*, (ARIAS MONTANUS,) "upon the mouth of his way:" a form of speaking frequently used in scripture to note the suitableness or proportion of the thing: "according to the mouth of his eating;" (Exod. xvi. 21;) that is, according to the measure of his eating. So Num. vii. 5: "To every Levite according to the mouth," that is, the condition and degree, "of his service." Thus here, "Train up a child upon the mouth of his way," that is, in such a way as is not only good and honest in itself, but most proper and suitable to the spirit, disposition, end, and capacity of the child. † As children are to be fed with such meat, so they are to be taught in such a manner, as they can most easily and profitably digest. Teach them but thus "upon the mouth," and then out of their mouth shall come praise. (Psalm viii. 2.)

III. *Who they are that are thus to be trained up or catechised.*

SOLUTION. *All younger ones and inferiors that are committed by God or men to the care and conduct of superiors; all included in the name "child."*—The original word עַלְיָבֵּי admits of several significations: "An infant newly born; (Judges xiii. 7;) of three months old; (Exod. ii. 6;) a child as soon as he begins to speak and exert his reason." † Thus it runs parallel with the Greek word βρεφος; and so we find Timothy instructed ἀπο βρεφους, "from a child," a babe, a suckling. (2 Tim. i. 5, with iii. 15.) It takes in boys, also, and girls, sons and daughters of somewhat riper age, youths, as Shechem, (Gen. xxxiv. 19,) damsels and those marriageable. § (Deut. xxii. 19.) The word is also applied to Abraham's men-servants; (Gen. xxii. 3;) and to Boaz's maid-servants; (Ruth ii. 22; Esther iv. 4;) to such as, though they may be men in years, are "children in understanding." (Jer. i. 6; 2 Chron. xiii. 7; Isai. iii.

* *Juxta viam suam, id est, juxta viam genus quod ipsum sequi velit.* "According to his way; that is, according to the way in which you wish him to proceed."—EDIT. † *Pro captu ingenii ejus inferioris, ut non cum plus oneres, quàm atus fert.* "According to the capacity of his more infirm genius, so as not to burden him with more than his age is capable of bearing."—EDIT. ‡ *א עלְיָבֵּי Excussit: puerum, puerulum, infantem ex utero superrime excussum.* "It is derived from a root signifying, he shook off; and its meaning is, a child, a little child, an infant just born."—EDIT. § *Ita hodiè Rabbini puerum quinque annorum ad Biblia, decem ad Mischna seu textum Talmudicum, tredecim ad Precepta, quindecim ad Talmud.* "Thus in modern times, the Rabbins direct a boy of five years of age to read and study the Bible; one of ten years, the Mischna, or the text of the First Talmud; one who is thirteen years old, the Precepts; and one of fifteen years, the Second Talmud or Gemara."—EDIT.

4; viii. 4.) These all, and every one of these, come within the list of those that Solomon and his God would have trained up and catechised. (Prov. xxii. 6.) Nay, let me add, there is not "a younger son of the prophets;" not one that sits at the feet of those learned Gamaliels, those truly reverend Elijahs, that can justly plead exemption from this (*seeming task*, shall I say? or) *real honour* of being clearly taught in, and firmly fixed upon, those everlasting foundations, "the first principles of the oracles of God." (Heb. v. 12; vi. 1.)

IV. *Who they are that are thus to train up or catechise these inferiors and younger ones, and why.*

SOLUTION. *All their respective superiors in [the] church or family.*

(I.) SUPERIORS IN THE CHURCH.—These, under what name or title soever the scripture presents them, are all bound to catechise; that is, in a most plain and sound manner, publicly to instruct the most ignorant of their charge in the first principles of the Christian religion. This duty so peculiarly belongs to them, that their whole work and office is set down under the name of catechising. "Let him that is taught," (in the Greek it is *ὁ κατηχούμενος*, "catechised,") "communicate unto him that teacheth;" in the Greek, *τῷ κατηχούντι*, "that catechiseth." (Gal. vi. 6.) But, to speak closely:—

1. Was not Paul a great apostle, yea, the grand doctor of the Gentiles? and yet he professeth himself a catechist. Paul's work was *to plant*, as well as *to water*; and *to beget*, as well as *to bring up*. (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7; iv. 15.) Paul compares himself to a nurse; (1 Thess. ii. 7;) the saints to babes, such as had need of milk, and not of stronger meat. (1 Cor. iii. 1; Heb. v. 12, 13.) Paul professeth himself to be one of God's "stewards;" (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2;) and, if "faithful," he will see that the meanest, the weakest, in the family hath his due allowance. In a word, Paul styles himself "a master-builder." (1 Cor. iii. 10.) And wherein lies the art and honour of "a master-builder" so much as in solidly laying the foundation-stone, lest, for want of it, the building totter? (Matt. vii. 26, 27,)

2. Was not Peter a great officer in the church? and yet, sure I am, that, whatever dispensation Peter's pretended successor, or any of his allies, may boast and crack of, Peter himself stands charged with feeding "lambs" as well as "sheep." (John xxi. 15—17.) In the church there are not only adult and perfect fathers, and strong in faith, but infants and babes, weak in faith, such as are ignorant of the word of righteousness, "lambs" to be carried in the bosom. (Isai. xl. 11.)

3. The great dulness, incapacity, and slowness of heart, that is in the people to understand by any other way of teaching, calls aloud for this elementary way of teaching. By this means, those that in vain do hear those *elaborate labours of the learned* in a more full and copious dilating on the articles of faith, are, by *these little morsels of catechising*, (as it were, chewed for them,) nourished-up unto salvation. This manner of teaching the prophet hints, like a discreet schoolmaster, not to pour-in his precepts all at once; (Isai. xxviii. 10, 13;) for then, like water poured on narrow-mouthed vessels, it would mostly run over; but instil drop by drop. It becomes pastors to be frequent in preaching, to be accurate in their sermons; but yet they may by no means forget the shallow,

indocible, intractable temper of their hearers. It is in vain to give great gobbets of meat to an infant; so far from feeding of him, that is a ready way to choke him.* That ministry usually proves the most effectual that drops as the rain, and distils as the dew.† (Deut. xxxii. 2; Ezek. xx. 46.)

4. The want and neglect of catechism [are] confessed to be one of the principal causes of all those desperate defections that have been made from the faith in this our English Africa, and of those insolent invasions that have been made upon it by loose tongues and lewder pens. What blasphemous disputes against the infinite merit and Deity of our Saviour! as if we intended to justify the Jews in condemning him to the cross, for avouching himself the co-essential and co-eternal Son of God! (John xix. 7.) How audaciously have they proceeded in the like sacrilegious attempts against the Holy Ghost! ‡ What proud brags of the purity of man's nature, and the sufficiency of his power to save himself! How daring have men been to decry the scriptures, the Lord's day, and all the ordinances of God's institution! to despise the sacraments, as if they were as beggarly elements as the Jewish ceremonies! to deride singing of psalms, as if David's harp were out of tune! to reject prayer, as if they were raised to such a plentiful measure of spiritual riches, that it were a shame for them to crave any further supply! In a word, scarce any article of the Christian religion which hath not received many a desperate stab under its fifth rib, and that from the hand of those whose hearts did erewhile seem ready to expose their heads to the greatest hazard, for the least tittle of sacred truth. And whence all this, but from ignorance of truth? Had truth been clearly understood, it could never have been so unworthily undervalued, much less so treacherously undermined, and least of all so impudently affronted, as woe is us! we behold it, both to our grief and horror. And whence this barbarous ignorance, but from want of due catechising? *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* §

OBJECTION. "True: the laying of foundations, instructions in the first principles of religion, [is] a most useful, necessary work; but what ground is there in the holy scriptures for that form or manner of catechising as is now in use; namely, by way of question and answer?"

SOLUTION 1. There are several texts of scripture from which the learned conclude that this mode of catechising was used in the apostles' days, and by the apostles themselves and their immediate successors; and this in imitation of the Jews, who had *την μορφωσιν της γνωσεως και της αληθειας εν τω νομω*, "a form of knowledge and of the truth in the law," (Rom. ii. 20,) out of which they instructed the ignorant, and taught babes. Thus, the apostle had given the Romans *τυπον διδαχης*, a "form of doctrine;" (Rom. vi. 17;) and to Timothy, *υποτυπωσιν υγιαινοτων λογων*, "a form of sound words;" (2 Tim. i. 13;) "a form of sound words," which contained "the principles of the doctrine of

* *Laterem lavat.*—BOWLES, *Pastor Evangel.* lib. ii. "He who expects by washing a brick to change its colour, labours to no purpose."—EDIT.

† *Serpendum humi, et cum suis quasi balbutiendum.*—*Ibid.* "The pastor who looks for success among a dull and uneducated people, must be content to speak in lowly strains, as if his words crept along the ground, and appear only to be prattling among his children."—EDIT.

‡ BIDDLE'S "Catechism."
§ "This is the source of all our grief."—EDIT.

Christ," and "the first principles of the oracles of God;" six whereof are distinctly mentioned, Heb. v. 12; vi. 1, 2. To these plain and fundamental rules, as to their standard, the apostles would have all doctrines that were preached to be brought and tried, and so far to be allowed of as they held proportion with them. This is that which the apostle calls "prophesying" *κατα την αναλογιαν της πιστεως*, "according to the proportion of faith." (Rom. xii. 6.) Thus the Magdeburg [Cen-turiators] from these scriptures assert, that there was a catechism delivered by the apostles, in which they had drawn the doctrine of the gospel into short heads, for instructing of the children of the church.

2. Eusebius saith, that there was one set apart on purpose for this office in the primitive church, called "the catechist," *qui catechismum docebat*, and others called *catechumeni*, "that learned the catechism;" and these were of two sorts. (1.) *Jews and Heathens*, that offered themselves to be listed among the Christians, and were not as yet sufficiently seen in the great fundamentals of the Christian religion. (2.) *The children of believing parents that had been baptized*. Both these were put under the careful institution of the catechist, and by him to be so far instructed, till they had attained so much knowledge in the principles of the Christian religion, as that the Heathens might be admitted to baptism, and the Christian children to the Lord's supper.

To this custom some of the learned judge that Peter alludes in 1 Peter iii. 21: "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but *επερωτημα*, the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." True, the main thing is "the answer of a good conscience" in a man's own self; yet there was "a good answer" in his mouth to the catechist, who was to ask them "a reason of the hope" that was in them. (1 Peter iii. 15.)*

3. The primitive fathers, that trod on the heels of the apostles, and were most likely to be best acquainted with the apostles' practice, highly esteemed this way of teaching, and constantly used it. "Cyprian," saith Optatus, "used it at Carthage; Origen, at Alexandria." Hence Clemens Alexandrinus's *Pædagogus*; Cyril's [of Jerusalem] *Catecheses Mystagogicæ*; Lactantius's *Institutiones*; Athanasius's *Synopsis*; Augustine's *Enchiridion*, *Liber de Doctrinâ Christianâ, et Liber de catechizandis Rudibus*; Fulgentius *De Fide*.

4. Many of the ancient councils made decrees and canons for catechising. (*Concil. Neocæs.* Canones 6, 7; *Concil. Tolet.* Canon 24.) In this, consent all the Reformed churches *uno ore*. Nay, which is more, the Papists themselves that were assembled in the council of Trent, (observing that, in the later spring of the gospel, the use of catechising in the Reformed churches was one of the special means of with-

* *Allusio facta ad morem veterem catechistarum interrogantium catechumenos adultos ante baptismum, qui ad Christianismum, vel Judæis, vel Gentilitate vocati, Credis? Credo. Abrenuntias? Abrenuntio. Cujus origo in exemplo Eunuchi, Actor. viii. 37.*—SPANHEMII *Dubia Evangelica*, pars iii. p. 97; TRAP in *Mat. xiii. 51*; BOWLES, *Pastor Evangelicus*, lib. ii. cap. 5. "An allusion is here made to the ancient method adopted by the catechists, when interrogating adult catechumens before baptism, who had been called out of Judaism or Heathenism, to the public profession of Christianity: *Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus? 'I believe in him.' Dost thou renounce all other trust? 'I renounce it.'* The origin of this practice may be traced up to the example of the Eunuch, who gave to Philip the answer of a good conscience, as recorded in Acts viii. 37."—EDIT.

drawing people from the darkness of Popery to the light of the gospel, and of so firmly grounding professors in the true religion as nothing could withdraw them from the same; and so the heretics, as they were pleased to style them, had got much ground,) strongly moved the council, that there might be a Catechism compiled of the principles of the Romish religion, as *that that was most likely to give check to that deluge of heresy which, through the heretics' catechising, was breaking-in upon them.*

5. This manner of teaching by way of catechising, (namely, by propounding the question, and putting the child to answer it, as the echo doth the voice,) is a most ready way to make any instruction to take. Whence it is that in all schools of learning this course is taken; namely, the teacher propounds his questions, and requires answers from those that are instructed: whereas if you speak never so well or so long, (yea, the longer the worse,) in a set and continued speech, it useth to vanish in the air, without any observable notice or after-fruit.

(II.) SUPERIORS IN THE FAMILY.—And these are *parents and family governors*: to whom we may adjoin *schoolmasters and tutors*. These all are concerned in this great duty of training-up and catechising those that are committed to their charge and conduct.

FIRST. How deeply parents are obliged to this duty, is written, as it were with a sun-beam, in the scriptures, where we find precepts, precedents, arguments, more than many, to evince it.

1. *Precepts.*—The Israelites are bound to “tell in the ears of their sons, and of their sons’ sons, what things” the Lord had “wrought in Egypt,” that they also might know Jehovah to be the Lord. (Exod. x. 2.) The parents are bound to be expositors of that great rite of the paschal lamb, (Exod. xii. 24, 26, 27; xiii. 8, 14, 15,) and of the stones set up in the midst of Jordan; (Joshua iv. 6, 7, 21, 22, 24;) bound also to teach their children the words which they heard from the Lord their God in Horeb, even the ten commandments. (Deut. iv. 9, 10.) How doth this duty sparkle with a radiant lustre in that great text, Deut. vi. 6, 7!—“These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” “It is the eternal God that here gives forth his strict command to parents. *These words*—All these words, precepts, promises, threatenings. *Shall be in thy heart*—Not in thy *head* only, so as to know; but in thy *heart*, to affect. An heart inflamed with the love of God and his truth, God knew, was one of the most effectual means to engage the tongue to make known his truth. But not only in their heart, but houses too: (Joel i. 13; Deut. xi. 19:) *Thou shalt teach them unto thy children*—Nor was this a *ceremonial* precept, or a command given peculiarly to the Jews, for their assistance in their remembrance of the law of God, as their phylacteries and fringes, &c.; (Exod. xiii. 9; Deut. vi. 8, 9;) but was and is a *moral*, perpetual, standing precept, binding us in gospel-times as well as them.”* The same things [which] we find in this text, we find also in the New Testament. “The word of Christ” must “dwell

* AINSWORTH in Deut. vi. 6, 7.

richly in us ;” (Col. iii. 16 ;) all one with this here : “ Let it be in thine heart,” and in our houses also. We must “ teach and admonish ” *others* ; we are to “ bring up *our children* in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph. vi. 4.)

Two branches in this precept :—

(1.) *Parents warned not to abuse their authority by provoking their children.*—In the best of parents there is not only natural affection, but also natural corruption ; by reason whereof, if they watch not well, they will be very prone, not only to be rash, but furious, with their children, that their will may be fulfilled ; therefore is this bridling caution needful : “ Provoke not.” (Eph. vi. 4.)

(2.) *Parents are here commanded not to neglect to lay-out and improve their authority in instructing their children.*—This also is necessary, because parents are too, too apt to be fondly indulgent, and on that account careless to bring up their children in such courses as are necessary for knowing and doing the will of God. Both, therefore, are of special use. Do not *provoke*, but *instruct*. Yea, in instructing, take care that you do not provoke ; and *so* instructing, you will not, at least, you shall not have cause to, provoke : for a well-instructed child is in God’s way to be an obedient child, and very tractable to instructing parents, so that there will be no occasion of provocation from him, or being provoked against him. Bring them up, therefore, we must ; but in what ? “ In the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Εν παιδείᾳ, in all *profitable knowledge*, suitable to a child’s age and state ;* for the composing and framing of him, by this his knowledge, unto a commendable and virtuous carriage, for the doing of greater good in human society for the time to come ; but more especially in religious nurture, “ instruction in righteousness ;” (2 Tim. iii. 16 ;) and, as it follows, “ in the admonition of the Lord ;” in the best and highest kind of “ nurture,”—that which is drawn and fetched from the word of the Lord, and so will be most accepted of him, and most profitable to children : not only in arts and sciences, to make them worldly wise and learned ; nor only in the mysteries of trading and worldly employment, to make them rich ; nor only in matters of morality and civil honesty, to make them sober and virtuous ; but in the mysteries of true religion, “ in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” “ in the words of faith and of good doctrine.” (1 Tim. iv. 6,) to make them truly happy.

2. *Precedents.*—It was the constant practice of the saints of old carefully to instruct their children in the things of God ; and that,

First. *In the truths and worship of the true God.*—Thus divines conclude that Adam instructed his sons, Cain and Abel, to bring their offerings to the Lord. (Gen. iv. 3, 4.) And from Adam down along to Moses, for the space of two thousand years, how was the true religion communicated, but by oral tradition from parents to their children ? “ I know Abraham, 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 ; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Gen. xviii. 19.) In this text we have Abraham’s testimonial subscribed by God himself ; wherein God,

* Vide ZANCHIUM et MUSCULUM, in loc.

(1.) *Asserts what Abraham was for the present.*—A man of integrity, a man greatly beloved of God. "I know Abraham;" I know his judgment, I know his heart; I am well acquainted with the frame of his spirit, the inclination of his will, the bent of his affections; and I know him so well, that I cannot but highly approve and dearly love him, and will trust him with an *arcanum*, make him as it were of my privy council, in imparting to him my great design concerning wicked Sodom.

(2.) *Foretells for the future.*—

(i.) *What Abraham would do for God.*—Namely, that he would endeavour to bring all that were under his command to be at God's command. Abraham will not leave his children and servants to their own genius, counsels, lusts, ignorance, idleness, superstition, idolatry, but "command" them to "keep the way of Jehovah." Abraham will endeavour to set-up God in his family, to instruct it in that way of faith, worship, and obedience, which God requireth.

(ii.) *What God will do for Abraham.*—Namely, fulfil his promise, keep his word. Holy Job, that nonpareil of the world; "none like him in the earth; that perfect, that upright man;" (Job i. 8;) Job sends and sanctifies his children; (Job i. 5;) that is, says that late burning and shining light, * "sent a message to them, to command them to prepare and fit themselves for the holy duty of sacrificing." This preparation to holy duties is often called "sanctifying." (Exod. xix. 22; 1 Sam. vi. 15; John xi. 55.) Job's main and special care was for the souls of his children. Job's message to his children was not to ask them how they did after their feasting, whether they had surfeited, how the reckoning was inflamed. No; his eye and heart mostly fixed on this, that they might be sanctified. His holy soul struck a perfect light to Paul's desire before Agrippa: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am;" (Acts xxvi. 29;) and to John's joy: "I have no greater joy than to hear that *my children walk in the truth.*" (3 John 4.) Thus David, that man after God's own heart: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." (Psalm xxxiv. 11.) But more especially, I would commend to your most accurate view that lovely prospect presented to us in Prov. iv. 3, 4. Behold there a great and glorious king, descending from his imperial throne, laying aside his golden crown and royal sceptre, and sitting down on a lower seat with a child, a Solomon at his knee. So that the king is now humbled into a tutor, the prince into a pupil. A brief account of the lecture the text gives us: *I was my father's son*; that is, I was so my father's son, as that I was also his Jedidiah; so *beloved*, as if I had been his only son. "He taught me also, and said unto me, *Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.*"

Thus we have seen the practice of GODLY FATHERS.

But what have GODLY MOTHERS done? Have they been so cruelly forgetful of their children, as not to have compassion on the sons of their womb? What! worse than sea-monsters, who "draw out the breast, and give suck to their young ones?" (Lam. iv. 3.) No, no! those true daughters of Sarah have been more spiritually kind and benign.

* JOSEPH CARYL on Job i. 5.

(1.) In the front of these stands our mother, **THE SPOUSE OF CHRIST**: *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house.* (Canticles viii. 2.)—"That is, 'into mine own house or mansion;' as is usual with us to call our own houses, 'the houses of our fathers.' The church, in her universal latitude, is the mother of all her members. *Who would or doth instruct me*—The church, who is 'the pillar and ground of truth' in this respect, that she presenteth and holdeth forth that truth outwardly, which only Christ bringeth to the heart, and makes effectual. (John vi. 45.)" *

(2.) Upon her right hand stands David's royal consort, queen **BATHSHEBA**, whom we find laying the law before king Lemuel; that is, her son Solomon; called Lemuel, that is, "of God," because God had ordained him to be king over Israel, rather than any of his elder brethren. (1 Kings ii. 15, 22.) "The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy," doctrine, or instruction, "that his mother taught him. What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?" (Prov. xxxi. 1, 2.)

(3.) Upon her left hand let the hoary-headed, holy grandmother **LOIS**, and the tender, discreet, pious mother **EUNICE**, be placed, who even *απο βρεφους*, "from the dug," as it were, instructed their hopeful Timothy in the knowledge of the holy scriptures, which were "able to make him wise unto salvation." (2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15—17.)

[It was the constant practice of the saints of old carefully to instruct their children,] †

Secondly, *In the ways and works of God's providence.*—Thus Gideon gives testimony to his forefathers, that they had told their children of "all the miracles" which the Lord had done; saying, "Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" (Judges vi. 13.) Thus the Psalmist: "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." (Psalm xlv. 1, 2.) And again: "Sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: † that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God." (Psalm lxxviii. 2—7.) Thus Hezekiah, upon his recovery from death: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth." (Isai. xxxviii. 19.) They that survive, they alone can, and each of them should, praise the Lord; this being the principal end to which men should live, and for which they should desire life. (Psalm lxxi. 17, 18.) "The father to the children shall make known thy truth." That is, they shall transmit the memory of thy faithfulness in the performance of thy promises to posterity. (Psalm cxlv. 4.)

* "Assembly's Annotations," in Canticles viii. 2.
† Deut. iv. 9; vi. 7; xi. 19.

† See page 106.—EDIT.

3. *Arguments.*

(1.) *The souls of children, as well as their bodies, are committed to the care and trust of parents by the Lord, to whom they must give a strict account.*—It is a grand mistake to think that the care of souls belongs only to ministers. True, indeed, it eminently belongs to our spiritual pastors. If they “warn not the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will” God require at the negligent pastor’s hand. (Ezek. iii. 18, 19.) And no less doth God bespeak parents in the same language that we find, 1 Kings xx. 39: “Keep this man,” *this child*: “if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life.” If he be lost, and miscarry through thy neglect, thy life, thy soul shall go for his. As, therefore, parents dread the guilt of soul-murder of their children, they ought to be careful of their pious education.*

(2.) *The state of poor children’s souls calls aloud on parents for the discharge of this duty.*—Alas! poor creatures; conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity; (Psalm li. 5;) those whom we fondly miscall “innocent babes,” come into the world with an indictment on their foreheads, with ropes about their necks, full of guilt, full of filth; bloody, loathsome, creatures; (Gen. viii. 21; Job xiv. 4; Prov. xxii. 15;) “children of wrath;” (Eph. ii. 3;) nothing in them by nature that is good, an averseness from all good; (Rom. vii. 18;) a proneness to all evil. (Psalm lviii. 3; Eph. iv. 18.) These young lions [are] prone to cruelty; they are serpents in the very egg, and cockatrices in the very shell. (Isai. lix. 5.) And whence comes all this guilt and filth, but from “the hole of the pit out of which they are digged,” from that unhappy rock out of which they “are hewn,” (Isai. li. 1,) their unhappy parents? (Job xiv. 1, 4; xv. 14.) Sinful parents, having utterly lost God’s image, like Adam, beget children in their own. (Gen. v. 3.) Nay, Abraham himself, though a circumcised saint, as a natural father, begets an uncircumcised Isaac. The vine they spring from is a “vine of Sodom;” and therefore the children are the grapes of Gomorrah. (Deut. xxxii. 32.) Bloody parents are we to our children; how much then doth it concern parents, even in common justice, to endeavour to cure those wounds that they themselves have given, (Exod. xxi. 19,) and to preserve their little ones from perishing by that leprosy, infection, poison, which they by nature convey into them! And here what topics do not offer themselves to convince the judgments of rational parents?

(i.) *There is στροφή, a “natural love and affection,” in parents to their children.*—Nature gives bowels of pity to them that are in misery, specially to children. (Isai. xlix. 15; Psalm ciii. 13.) Will parents, then, prove unnatural? nay, worse than beasts; for “even the sea-monsters draw out the breast, and give suck to their young ones.” (Lam. iv. 3.) “Charity edifieth,” saith the apostle. (1 Cor. viii. 1.) David’s and Bathsheba’s tender love to their Solomon put them upon careful instructing of him; wherein they showed their love to his soul as well as his body.

* *Omnia quæ deliquerint filii, a parentibus requirentur, qui non erudierint filios suos.*—ORIGENES. “The punishment due to the delinquencies of which children have been guilty, will be exacted from those parents who have not imparted to them salutary instruction.”

—EDIT.

(ii.) *Parents either do or should principally aim at the spiritual and eternal good of their poor children.*—And what more profitable and effectual way to promote this, than pious instruction and education? The earth often proves according to the seeds cast into it. The vessel usually retains a smack and tincture of that with which it was first seasoned. What blessings might parents prove to their children! What excellent things might be effected by them, if they did but take the advantage of their tender years, and *then* resolutely set themselves to bring them unto God!

(iii.) *Parents cannot but love themselves, their own peace, their own comforts, their own delights.*—And what more probable means to advance these than the pious education of their children? which fully appears by this dilemma: *Either their conscientious endeavours prove successful, or not.*

If not, if after all care, pains, prayer, faithfulness, the crop should not answer the seed, why, this may relieve and support,—that it is not through the parent's default. The child dies, but not by the father's hand. He hath discharged his duty, and thereby, in the sight of God, delivered *his own soul from guilt*,* though he could not deliver *his child's soul from ruin*. Where God sees such "a willing mind," backed with sincere, utmost, constant, endeavours, God "accepts" the faithful parent "according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. viii. 12.) But,

If the Lord please to smile on endeavours, into what a transport and ecstasy of joy will it raise the serious parent, to see the corruption of his child's nature healed, to see saving grace wrought in his heart! If such a sight be so pleasing to spiritual fathers, to Paul, (1 Thess. ii. 10,) to John, (3 John 4,) how ravishing must it needs be to natural parents! (Prov. x. 1; xxiii. 24, 25;) but especially when this is wrought by their own means.

(iv.) *When this grace is wrought in the hearts of children, and that especially by their parents, this cannot but inflame the hearts of children with dearest love of, and engage them to the highest duty to, their parents.*—They must of necessity be far more loving and dutiful than otherwise they could or would be. "A wise son maketh a glad father." (Prov. xv. 20.) But how? Namely, by a dutiful and respectful carriage.

(v.) *By this means parents shall do unspeakable good to their families and posterity.*—Hereby, even many ages after they are dead, like Abel, they shall yet speak; and posterity hearing the voice of their ancestors, coming as it were from the dead, they will be more apt to credit and believe. (Deut. iv. 9.) By pious education, the true religion is kept up in the world, and propagated from age to age. The care of the two tribes and a half of propagating the true religion to their posterity, is very notable in that famous scripture, Joshua xxii. 24, 25. They built an altar of testimony. (Verse 10.) At this their brethren the Israelites are highly offended; but received full satisfaction, when they were assured that this was done for the sake of posterity, lest they should be made to "cease from fearing the Lord."

(vi.) *Parents have many and great advantages, above all others, for the successful instructing and educating of their children.*

* *Liberavit animam suam.*

Children are more confident of their parents' love than any others'.— Whether ministers and strangers speak to them *in love*, they are uncertain; but of their parents' love they are well assured. Now nothing takes so much with any one, as that which is believed to proceed from love, especially by one that loves. "This instruction," saith the loving child, "comes not only from my dear father's lip or head, but from his affectionate heart; and therefore I will readily receive it, and lodge it in my own."

Parents have their children in hand betimes, before they are fly-blown with any false opinions, or leavened with bad impressions.—Before they have any other sin than that which was born with them. Parents, therefore, have an opportunity of making the first impressions on them, even while they are most docile, tender, flexible, and least apt to make resistance against instruction. But now, when they come to their minister, instructor, tutor, they are as a paper printed before, and, therefore, unapt to receive another impression. They have much to be untaught before they can be taught. Fraught with self-conceitedness and proud objections, [they are] more apt to strive against and resist instruction, than humbly and readily to receive it.

(3.) To wind up this argument on the closest bottom: *Children wholly depend on parents for their present maintenance and their future portions.*—And they know it is their interest to hearken and obey. Parents' authority over their children is most unquestionable. They dare not open their mouths against it, as they will adventure to do against ministers'. Parents have the power of the rod, to back instruction. (Prov. xxii. 15.) They best know the peculiar diseases and temperatures [temperaments] of their children, and so best know how to choose and apply the most proper remedy. Parents are nearest their children, and can best discern all their faults in time; and have opportunity of speaking to them in the most familiar manner, that may best be understood; and, after this, to inculcate their instructions, and drive them home, that what is not done at one time may be done at another.

By all these advantages it appears that God hath furnished parents, above all others, to be instruments of their children's good, and the first and greatest promoters of their salvation.

OBJECTION I. But methinks I hear some parents muttering: "To instruct children is the grand duty of our ministers. It is they that are to take the great charge of the souls of these our lambs."

SOLUTION. And do you indeed give up these your lambs to be fed, to be instructed by them? Suppose you did, (as, Heaven knows! thousands of parents do not, as they ought,) yet know,

That every parent is as deeply charged with the souls of his children, as any pastor is with the souls of his flock, and more deeply too.

1. *You are as oft and as expressly charged to use the means to save your children's souls, and to breed grace in them, as any minister is.*—Read, consider, remember, Exod. xiii. 8. Thou shalt show thy son the meaning, end, use of the sacrament. (Deut. vi. 6, 7; Psalm lxxviii. 5; Eph. vi. 4.) Show me any text of scripture more express and peremptory for any minister's instructing of his flock.

2. *Parents stand obliged to their children by more and stronger bonds than any pastor can be to his flock.*—Bonds of nature, as well as grace.

3. *Parents have more means and opportunities to prevail with their children than any pastor living can have to do good on his flock.*—What a surpassing interest have parents in the esteem, love, affection of their children! What advantage may they take of their children's tender years! What continual converse with them! What an awful authority over them! What strict obligations upon them, which no minister can so much as pretend unto! The truth is, none upon earth have such fair opportunities to instruct and bring others to goodness, as parents have. (Deut. iv. 10.) This was that that holy Hezekiah meant in his prayer: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee." And who among all the living? "The father;" he shall do it chiefly, principally; but how? "By making known thy truth to the children?" (Isai. xxxviii. 18, 19.) As though he had said, Parents, by deriving religion to their posterity, may greatly honour God above others.

OBJECTION II. "But to what end should we teach children? Alas! they do not understand what they say. They do but act the parrot, know not what it is they do repeat; and so, whilst we pretend to advance the fear and service, we do but make our children to profane the name, of God, or to take it in vain."

SOLUTION 1. *Our carnal reasonings ought not to countermand divine injunctions.*—The text is express: "Train up a child." "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children," (Deut. vi. 7,) or whet and sharpen my law upon them. Timothy's instruction, and that from a little sucking child, is commended by the apostle as a fair precedent to the whole Christian world. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) We know not who are under God's election, nor the appointed time of his effectual calling; and therefore must use the means to all, especially to children that are under the federal stipulation; such are commanded to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth." (Eccles. xii. 1.) And who should endeavour to make deep 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.)

2. *If this fear and jealousy must hinder catechising of children, who knows how long it will be hindered?*—For even children well grown up, being not before catechised, are not likely, at their first teaching, so to understand what is said to them as to repeat it with due reverence. Do we not find Christ himself instructing Nicodemus in the great mystery of regeneration, when he was able to return him no more than that childish answer: "How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb?" (John iii. 4.) We find our Saviour delivering a divine truth to those that were known to be his disciples, who still accompanied him, and repeated themselves what he spake to them in the very same words wherein he delivered it, and yet, when all was done, confessed they could not tell what he said. (John xvi. 16—18.) May we therefore say, that, by reason of their ignorance, they took that name of God, his Word, in vain? No; this was not a vain business, for in this way they understood the words of Christ at last, the meaning whereof they knew not at first.

3. *Catechising may be considered under a double notion.*

(1.) *In regard of the present action.*

(2.) *As it is an introduction and preparation to the future and further knowledge of God.*—Now, though little ones do not at first so understand as to use with due reverence the name and things of God, yet it follows not that they take God's name in vain, because they repeat good things in order to, and for the gaining of, such a knowledge of God and of those holy things, as whereby they afterwards come to use them more reverently. And therein the first use of them, though not so reverent, hath a part, as being preparatory to it, and having an influence unto it, and working as a good means for the begetting of it. Do not we teach little ones their letters by signs, and certain petty devised sayings and resemblances, which put them in mind of their letters? And this is not a vanity, but a way suited to their narrow capacities, to make them learn them the sooner. So in this, and the like cases; the first rudiments are still to be taken and judged of, not in a way of *disjunction from* what follows after, but as a *preparation to it*; and being so taken, they are not vain, but material things, because they serve to very considerable ends. "It is neither vanity nor hypocrisy," saith a reverend author,* "to help children first to understand words and signs, in order to their early understanding of the matter and signification. Otherwise no man may teach them any language, or to read any words that be good, because they must first understand the words before the meaning." If a child learn to read in a Bible, it is not taking God's name or word in vain, though he understand it not, for it is in order to his learning to understand it. And it is not vain *which is* to so good a use.

Thus for parents.

SECONDLY. *Nor are Christian ministers and governors of families, together with school-instructors and tutors, less obliged to take care of the religious instruction and education of their respective servants and pupils.*

—Which clearly appears from hence :—

1. *The Lord commands it, and expects it, at the hands of masters.*—

When others intrust masters with the bodies of servants, God intrusts them with their souls, commands them to take care of them, as for which they must and shall give a strict account. "Lo, here," saith God, "is a poor mean servant; but he hath a precious and an immortal soul; a soul purchased with the same blood of God-man that his master's was; (Col. iii. 11;) and himself, though never so vile in the eye of sense, yet capable of being made a co-heir with Christ in heaven. Take this man, and take care of him, as thou wilt answer it at the great day. If this soul perish through thy default, thy life shall go for his." Look to it, therefore: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." Do not use them as slaves, as beasts, but rather as fellow-servants of the same Lord. (Col. iv. 1.)

In this text we may observe a *divine precept*, and a *persuasive argument* to back that precept.

(1.) *The precept*,—"Ye masters, give unto your servants,"

(i.) To δικαιοῦν, "*That which is just*," whatever is due to them by any positive contract, legality, or obligation. Aristotle names three things as due to servants: "work, food, correction." † To which, since our

* BAKER'S "Christian Directory," p. 682. † Εργον, τροφην, κολασιν.—*Æconomica*, i. 5.

servants are usually such as are not so by conquest, but by compact, but may add a fourth, namely, "wages:" Moderate work, convenient food, due correction, proportionable wages.

(ii.) Not only that which is just, but *την ισοτητα*, "that which is equal," too. And this refers not to the works themselves of servants and masters, but to the mind and manner of doing, which ought to bear a due proportion in both: For instance, in Col. iii. 22, 24, "servants" are commanded to "obey their masters in all things; not with eye-service, but in singleness of heart, fearing God, and as serving the Lord Christ." And masters are required to return them "that which is equal," when they rule them piously and religiously. That is just which the law of nature or nations requires; that is equal which true Christian charity and meekness requires, and which is due to servants by a moral obligation.*

(2.) *The argument.*—"Knowing," that is, holding this for an undoubted principle, believing it, and constantly remembering, that masters on earth have a superior Master in heaven. As servants, if gracious, are God's *sons*, and thereby may be comforted; so masters are God's *servants*, and thereby may be cautioned. Are masters' eyes on their servants, to see whether they do their duties faithfully? so God's eye watcheth them much more, to observe whether they carry themselves in their relation conscientiously. Holy Job stood in awe of this great Master, and acted accordingly. (Job xxxi. 13.) "Servants" must "be obedient unto their masters as unto Christ," as "serving the Lord Christ;" and the masters must instruct and command in Christ. (Eph. vi. 5—8.) Mr. Dod, that great servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, from Exod. xx. 10, gravely observes from those words, "Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant," &c., that it belongs to all family-governors to see that their servants, and all inferiors under their charge, holily observe and keep the Lord's day.

2. I argue from those many and great benefits which accrue from the holy instruction of servants and other family inferiors.

(1.) *The church is in an immediate capacity to receive benefit by it.*—If mistresses of families did their parts, and sent such polished materials to the churches as they ought to do, the work and life of the pastors of the church would unspeakably be more easy and delightful. What a reviving of heart would it be to us to preach to such an auditory! to catechise, instruct, examine, and watch over them who are so prepared by a wise and holy education, and understand and love the doctrine which they hear. How teachable and tractable will such be! How successfully the labours of their pastors laid-out upon them! How comely and beautiful the churches be, which are composed of such persons! and how pure and comfortable will their communion be! The orchard is according to what the nursery is; so churches are according to what families are. Good families make good churches, and good education makes good families.

(2.) *Not only the church but state would receive much good by this.*—Towns, cities, counties, kingdoms, would gain by it: and it must needs be so; for what are they, but the whole made up of these parts? And

* DAVENANT in Col. iv. 1.

the whole must needs be such as the parts are of which it consists. Families are but like the book in loose sheets, and kingdoms like the book bound up: the one but like letters that are single and apart; the other like letters joined together. Now if the sheets be not good, or the letters not good, the book or writing cannot possibly be good. Give us the best magistrates, let them enact the best laws, and back them with the strictest execution; yet societies will be nought, whilst governors of families neglect their duty in religious education.

(3.) *With what a "cloud of witnesses" do the holy scriptures present us of governors of families, that have been greatly conscientious in their faithful discharge of this duty!*—We told you before of Abraham's trained, instructed, catechised servants. (Gen. xviii. 19.) After him, Joshua, who resolves, that, whatever others might do, he and his household would serve the Lord: (Joshua xxiv. 15:) though others should forsake the Lord, yet he, like Noah and Lot, [would be] just in his generation. Joshua doth not only choose to be saved by Jehovah, but to serve Jehovah. But, more especially, observe the latitude and circumference of his choice: "I and my house:" not himself without his family, much less his family without himself; but himself and his family; and first himself, and then his family: "*we will serve the Lord.*" Lo here the firmness and stability of Joshua's choice! "*We will serve the Lord;*" not only, "*We desire to do it,*" but, "*We are fully resolved to do it.*"

Hear what David promises and pre-engages whenever he came to sway the royal sceptre; namely, to be a singular example, both as a prince, and as a master of a family. (Psalm ci. 1—8.) In which respect this psalm should be often read and ruminated on by such, that their houses may be as "the house of David;" (Zech. xii. 8;) and as Melancthon attests concerning the palace of George prince of Anhalt, that it was at once *ecclesia, academia, et curia*, "a royal court, a learned academy, and an holy church." Mr. Fox reports, that bishop Ridley often read and expounded this psalm to his household, hiring them with money to get it by heart.* Well, what says David here? "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way." (Psalm ci. 2.) I will begin the intended reformation at myself, and then set things to rights in my family. "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." And then see what work he makes, how conscientiously he demeanes himself towards those under his family-charge, from verses 3—8. Good governors of families are like that nobleman, who had for his impress two bundles of millet bound together, with this motto, *Serrare et servari, meum est*: for "the nature of millet is to guard itself from corruption, and all those things that lie near it." It is a rare eulogy that is given the late reverend and religious Dr. Chatterton, that "he was an house-keeper fifty-three years, yet in all that time never kept any of his servants from church to dress his meat; saying, that he desired as much to have his servants know God as himself." †

In short, observe the strain and current of the whole scriptures, and you shall find very few or none of those family-governors that were really converted themselves, but they gave this excellent testimony of the truth and soundness of the grace of God in them, namely, in being

* "Acts and Monuments," 1559, fol.

† CLARK'S "Lives."

careful and solicitous to beget and breed it in the hearts of those that were under their roof and charge.* If Esther fasts, so shall her maids too. (Esther iv. 16.) And in the New Testament we find the master's interest and duty taken to be so great for the conversion of the rest, that as he was not to content himself with his own conversion, but to labour presently that his household should join with him, that so the whole family at once might be devoted to God; so God did bless his own order and ordinance to that end. And where he imposed duty on masters, he usually gave such success, that commonly the whole family was converted and baptized with the ruler of the family. So we read, Acts x. 2: Cornelius a centurion, a godly captain, a devout man, "and one that feared God with all his house:" to whom the angel promised that Peter should tell him words whereby he and all his household should be saved. (Acts xi. 14.) Doth the Lord open Lydia's heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul? It follows instantly: "She was baptized, and her household." (Acts xvi. 15.) Doth the gaoler believe on the Lord Jesus? Paul assures him that he shall be saved, and his house; and so it was, for "he, and all his, were baptized straightway," for "he believed in God with all his house." (Acts xvi. 32—34.) Christ no sooner comes to Zaccheus's soul, but salvation comes to Zaccheus's house. (Luke xix. 9.) Crispus "believes on the Lord with all his house." (Acts xviii. 8.) The nobleman "himself believed, and his whole house." (John iv. 53.) These family-governors, it seems, took special care of the welfare of their servants' souls; did not act like Turks, who mind nothing about their slaves but their doing their own work. These judged that if it were cruelty not to allow their servants bodily food, much more savage and bloody to starve their souls. And therefore it might well be said of those happy servants whom Providence fixed under their conduct, as the queen of Sheba of Solomon's servants: "Happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." (1 Kings x. 8.)

OBJECTION. But there are some masters, whose weakness and delusion I cannot but pity, that are apt to object thus: "True, it is good to teach our ignorant servants; but we much question, yea, in our consciences doubt, whether we may require and command them to learn. Will not this encroach on the liberty of their consciences, which ought to be left free?"

SOLUTION 1. I cannot but wonder at this depth of Satan, who so strangely inveigles men to tolerate all things by mere scrupling of them, and to let the reins loose purely out of strictness: to think it a sin in themselves to press a duty on others, and no less than a breach of God's holy laws to enjoin the keeping of them.

2. Tell me how comes it to pass that masters who can allow themselves to be severe enough to their servants for loitering in their shops, cannot find in their hearts to rebuke them for neglect of their souls; that they who hold themselves bound in conscience to inform their servants in all the secrets of their trade, should think themselves as much tied-up from pressing them to learn the mysteries of religion.

3. There is but too much cause of fear, lest they who use not all the means they can to bring their own servants to the faith, be themselves

* DR. JACOME'S *Dom. Deo Jun.*, p. 207.

brought at last to an unprofitable repentance. Sure I am, they that have not learned their duty to God, will never rightly perform their duty to men. I heartily wish, that proud, saucy, debauched behaviour, and lame quarrels, be not too sad proofs of this unhappy truth.

V. I have done with the fourth, I now proceed to the fifth and last inquiry, namely, *How the whole affair may be so prudently, piously, scripturally managed, as that it may become most universally profitable.*—And here I shall first address myself to my *superiors*, and then close all with directions to *inferiors*.

(I.) Then for *SUPERIORS*; and, among these, *ECONOMICAL ONES*:

1. *Let parents begin betimes with their children.*—*Απο βρεφους*, “As soon as ever they find them to have any use of reason, as soon as ever their understandings begin to bud and blossom.”

The discreet gardener begins to graff as soon as ever the sap begins to arise, and the stock to swell. In the old law we find more lambs, kids, young turtles, first-fruits, and green corn required, than other elder sacrifices. (Lev. ii. 14.) “Sow thy seed in the morn.” (Eccles. xi. 6.) Begin, I say, betimes; the sooner the better; according to that of the prophet: “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.” (Isai. xxviii. 9.) Old men (nay, indeed, and too many young men) think themselves too wise, as well as too old, to learn. Indeed, childhood and youth are the fittest times to learn in. It is best drawing a fair picture on a *rasa tabula*. The most legible characters are best written on the “whitest paper before it be soiled and slurred.” The twig, whilst young, is most easily twisted; the ground best sown, when soft and mollified.* Hence that of the royal preacher: “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” (Eccles. xii. 1.) Little ones have not as yet imbibed such false principles and notions, nor are they drenched with such evil habits, as elder ones are too, too frequently dyed with. *He* hath a very difficult province *whose* task it is to wash out the spots of a leopard, or to whiten an Ethiopian. And little less work hath he that undertakes to teach the truth to one that hath been brought-up in [error], and is now, as it were, naturalized to err: for those false notions must first be wholly rooted up, before truth can profitably be implanted. Such must be untaught much, before they can well be taught, though but a little.

2. *Labour, as much as in you lies, to entertain their tender attention with such truths as mostly affect their senses and fancies, and are most easily conveyed to their little understandings.* To wit:—

(1.) *Such truths, the sparks whereof are most alive in their corrupt nature.*—For instance, to know God that made the whole world, and them in particular; that this God is to be worshipped; that their parents are to be honoured; that no lie is to be told; that they must love others as themselves; that they must certainly die, and after death

* *Udum et molle lutum es; nunc, nunc properandus, et acri Fingendus sine fine rotâ.*—PERSII Sat. li. 23.

“But you who yet are moist and yielding clay,
Call for some plastic hand without delay;
Nor cease the labour till the wheel produce
A vessel nicely form'd, and fit for use.”—GIFFORD'S Translation.

be judged to an eternal state. Begin to season them with the sense of God's majesty and mercy.

(2.) *Deal as much in similitudes and plain and easy resemblances as you can.*—Taking your rise from the creatures [which] they see and hear, always greatly respecting their weak capacity. Are you sitting in your houses? you may thus bespeak them: "O my dear child! is this a handsome dwelling, this house made with stones and timber? O how much desirable is that house above with God, that 'house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens!'" When they awake out of sleep, mind them of their duty, of giving their first thoughts to God; (Psalm cxxxix. 1—18;) and of awaking out of sin "unto righteousness;" (1 Cor. xv. 34; Eph. v. 14;) and of their awaking, the last day, out of the grave by the sound of the trumpet. (1 Thess. iv. 16.) Do they see the light of the day shining into their eyes? ask them: "Is it indeed a pleasant thing to behold the sun? O how excellent, then, is God's goodness in causing 'the Sun of Righteousness to arise upon us, with healing in his wings!'" (Mal. iv. 2.) Are you putting on their clothes? "O my child! think on sin, which was the cause of your soul's nakedness, and of your body's need of apparel. Be not proud of your clothes, which are given to hide your shame. Never rest satisfied till your soul be arrayed with the robes of Christ's righteousness." When at the fire, tell them of that "lake of fire and brimstone that burneth for ever," into which all those that live and die in sin shall be cast: at table, how easy is it, how profitable, how delightful will it be, out of every creature there, to extract spiritual food for our souls! The bread minds them of the bread of eternal life; their hunger, of hungering after Christ's righteousness. By a river's side, how easy is it to mind them of "the water of life," and of those rivers of pleasure at God's "right hand for evermore!" (Psalm xvi. 11.) Thus may you, without the least tedium or disgust, teach those little bees to suck spiritual honey out of every flower. By these "similitudes," as by so many golden links, you may draw truths into their heads and memories.* (Hosea xii. 10.) Thus it pleased the Lord to teach his people of old, by using similitudes. (Isai. v. 1; Ezck. xvi. 3; Hosea i. 2.) Thus the Great Bishop of our souls taught his disciples by parables. (Matt. xiii. 39.) †

3. *Teach them the most useful, delightful, affectionate stories you can find in the word of God.*—For example, the creation of man; man's fall; the deluge; Isaac sacrificed; Lot and Sodom; Joseph; the golden calf; David and Goliath; the three children in the fiery furnace; Daniel in the lions' den; Jonah in the whale's belly; the children devoured by bears.

4. *Betimes acquaint them with the practice of religious duties.*—Read the word, pray, give thanks, sing psalms, in their presence. It is conceived by the learned, that the little children learned to sing hosanna to the praise of Christ, by hearing their parents sing the hundred and eighteenth Psalm, out of which that hosanna is taken.

5. *Endeavour to restrain them from all evil, and to breed in them a*

* *Assimilavi יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי* propheta etenim multis rebus Deum compararunt, patri, pastori, amico, leoni.—POLI *Synopsis*. "For the prophets compared God to many things; to a father, a shepherd, a friend, a lion," &c.—EDIT. † This paragraph is an imitation of the very eloquent and beautiful one in page 150 of the first volume of "the Morning Exercise at Cripplegate," 8vo. edition, 1844.—EDIT.

conscience of sin, even from the very breast.—No playing, no idle and vain chat, on the Lord's day. (Exod. xx. 10.) Ezekiel, from his youth and infancy, had not eaten any thing forbidden in the law; (Ezek. iv. 14;) made conscience of meals, when the appetite was most unruly. One fault amended by a child, out of conscience that it is a sin, is worth amending an hundred out of fear of the rod, or hope of reward only.

6. *Bring them to the public ordinances, as soon as they can come to be there, and kept there, without the disturbance of the church.*—The parent is to take care that the child sanctifies the sabbath day. (Exod. xx. 9, 10.) Joshua read all the words that Moses commanded "before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones." (Joshua viii. 35.) And not only captains, and elders, and officers, "with all the men of Israel," but their "little ones also stood before the Lord," to enter into covenant with him.* (Deut. xxix. 11.) "There were brought unto Christ little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them." But our Saviour gives check to their rebukes, and commands them to "suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto him;" and that on a weighty reason, because "of such is the kingdom of heaven:" and those little ones enjoyed the benefit and blessing of Christ's hand and prayer. (Matt. xix. 13—15; Mark x. 13; Luke xviii. 15.) "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the children, and those that suck the breasts." (Joel ii. 15, 16; Isai. ii. 5; Jonah iii. 5.) †

7. *After their return from the public [ordinances], be sure to call them to an account, according to their capacity.*—Examine, and try how they profit, how they understand and remember any thing at all that they have heard: repeat it, and make it still more and more plain to them; and, in repeating it, apply it also to their consciences. This is that which some divines understand by that "whetting or sharpening of the word on our children;" ‡ that is, Teach them by way of repetition; going over and over again, as men do with knives when they whet them; that so, as knives by such whetting are more keen and fit to cut, so the truths of God, by often turning and returning them on the ears and tongues of children, may pierce more deeply into their hearts and consciences, for their better understanding and affecting of them. This was our Saviour's practice, to call his disciples to an account, and to know of them what they remembered and understood of what they heard: "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 51.) "And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." (Mark iv. 34.) How careful will the child or servant be heedfully to mark what he hears, if he knows he shall be examined when he comes home! How much will this course help and confirm

* Joel ii. 15, 16; Jonah iii. 5. *Omnes sine ullo discrimine, ne infantibus exceptis.*—DRAUSIUS. "All persons, without any distinction, even infants not excepted."—EDIT.
 † *Ut patres et majores natu in illis perspicerent quid essent meriti, et magis exhorrent scelera sua, propter quæ non sibi solum, sed et liberis suis imminere interitus.*—CALVINUS.
 "That their parents, and those who were older than themselves, might have a due perception of their demerits, and might conceive the greater horror of their own transgressions, on account of which not only they, but likewise their children, were threatened with impending destruction."—EDIT. ‡ Deut. vi. 7; וְשִׁנְנָתָם *Et exarues ea; accuratè et commodissimè inculcabis.* Hinc נִדַּבְתָּ נֶפֶשׁ *proverbium, Quod in ore sit, et inculcetur.* "And thou shalt whet or sharpen these words on thy children; thou shalt inculcate them in a manner at once accurate and most convenient. Hence the origin of the Hebrew proverb, 'That which is in the mouth, and may be inculcated.'"—EDIT.

your children and servants, yea, yourselves also, to understand, believe, and practise that which hath been taught you! When those noble* Bereans had publicly received the word with all readiness of mind, that is, [when they] took the heads of Paul's sermon truly, they privately searched the scriptures daily, to see whether things were so; and finding, on their search, that the truths delivered were consonant to the scriptures, it is said, "Therefore," that is, for that very reason, "many of them believed." (Acts xvii. 11, 12.) And † not your understandings only, but your memories also. This way with your family will make you, the governors of it, better able to retain [the memory of these things]. This is clearly inferred from Deut. iv. 9: "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen," &c. But how shall this forgetfulness be prevented? Why, by "teaching them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." And this refreshing of your memories will not a little conduce to the stirring-up of your affections, and to work in you greater sense and deeper feeling of the truths you have heard. (2 Peter i. 13.)

8. *In all your instructions, most carefully avoid all tedious prolixity.*—Nothing more disgusts a child's spirit, than long and tedious discourses. Make-up the shortness of your discourse by frequency; a little now, and a little then, not all at once; drop by drop, as you pour liquor into narrow-mouthed bottles. As you do when you first begin to feed their bodies with a spoon, so must you do when you first begin to feed their souls with instruction. Long speeches burden their small memories too much; and, through men's imprudence, may unhappily occasion them to loathe spiritual manna. As physicians, therefore, in their dietetic‡ precepts prescribe to children, "Little and often;" so must we. Young plants may quickly be even over-glutted with rich manuring, and rotted with too much watering. Weak eyes, newly opened from sleep, at the first can hardly bear the glare of a candle. "Line upon line," therefore, "and precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little." (Isai. xxviii. 10.) You must drive the little ones towards heaven, as Jacob did his towards Canaan, very gently. (Gen. xxxiii. 13.) Fair and soft goes far.§

9. Having thus far seasoned your little ones, and their understandings being somewhat grown with their years, *now is the fittest time to put a catechism into their hands.*—That is, a platform of "sound words," (2 Tim. i. 13,) "by way of question and answer, in a short compendious method; whose terms, being clear and distinct, should be phrased, as near as may be, out of the holy scripture, and fitted to their capacities by a very plain and solid style, and to their memories by brief expressions."¶ And here I would humbly offer this advice: Make use of a double catechism,—a shorter and a larger: a *shorter*, to be learned by

* *Ευγενεστέροι*, "of better descent." *Non per civilem dignitatem, sed per spiritualem dignitatem.*—TRAP. "Not through any civil dignity to which they had attained, but through spiritual and gracious worthiness."—EDIT. † The sense requires the repetition of "How much will this course help," from a preceding sentence.—EDIT. ‡ One

edition has "diuretic," instead of this word; and another has "diaretic."—EDIT. § This entire paragraph is copied, almost *verbatim*, from the eighth sermon in the first volume of "the Morning Exercise in Cripplegate," (p. 150,) which was the composition of the Rev. Samuel Lee, A. M., and for which the author makes a proper acknowledgment in the next paragraph, where he produces another quotation from the same sermon.—EDIT. ¶ DR. JACOMB, *Dom. Deo*, p. 167. ¶ "Morning Exercise at Cripplegate," pp. 150, 151, edit. 1844.

those that have weak memories and capacities: a *larger*, to be got by heart by those that have more years, greater parts, and larger capacities. Thus I find the Synod of Dort prescribing in their Act for Catechizing.* In this we agree with that burning and shining light, Mr. Crook, of Winton, in Somerset, and that acute, grave, and pious pastor of Sutton, in Bedfordshire, Mr. Bowles, in his *Pastor Evangelicus*; and especially we find it done to our hands by the late "Assembly of Divines," sitting at Westminster, in their lesser and larger Catechism; and that upon this solid reason, lest, on the one hand, whilst we impose a burden on such weak shoulders as are not able to sustain it, they should despond and sink; and, on the other hand, [lest,] when we require of others that which is much beneath their supposed ability, they should pass it by with neglect at least, if not throw it off with scorn.

But what are the forms of catechising [which] I would propose?

I answer:—

1. *For the youngest and lowest rank.*—I suppose the articles of the Christian faith contained in that very ancient creed, commonly called "the Apostles' Creed;" "the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments;" "the Lord's Prayer;" and "the Institution of the two Sacraments of the New Testament." But here, as indeed in all religious instruction, remember that you are not to teach parrots, but Christians; persons, though for the present ignorant, yet capable of understanding both words and things.† Be not therefore satisfied in the child's bare repeating of the words, as a thick-skulled Papist is taught to mumble over his *Pater-noster* or *Ave-Maria*, which he no more understands than that sottish priest did his *mumpsimus*; but first unlock *the cabinet*, that is, open to the child the true meaning of the words, and then present him with *the jewels*, that is, the truths contained in those words. Remember it as an undoubted maxim: It is impossible clearly to apprehend truths, unless we rightly understand those words in which truths are wrapped up.

2. *For others that are of a larger capacity.*—I shall not presume to dictate, among those more than scores of excellent Catechisms that are extant, and may be of singular use both in families and churches, which to pitch upon, with the slighting of any of the rest. I bless the Lord for the common Catechism of our church, and for Dr. Hill's improvement of it, in which I was initiated when a child. God hath signally owned Mr. Perkins's "Six Principles," and no less Mr. Ball's "Catechism." Crook's "Guide" is highly esteemed by the learned, judicious, and godly; and, I judge, not unworthily, if for nothing else than this,—its great harmony with the "Sum and Substance of Christian Religion," composed by that great master in our English Israel.

These Catechisms, I say, to me, with many, many more, sparkle like so many precious diamonds in my eyes. But it pleased the Lord, in the beginning of my ministry, to direct me to the use of those Catechisms that were composed by the late reverend "Assembly of Divines at Westminster;" Catechisms which I then found greatly approved, not only by the godly and judicious at home, but also by several of the Reformed churches abroad; and such as have this peculiar excellency beyond most that I have seen,—that every answer in them is an entire proposition of

* November 30th, 1618, sess. 17; lib. ii. cap. 2.
ii. c. 5.

† BOWLES, *Pastor Evang.* lib.

itself, without relation to the question preceding. These Catechisms I have made use of, both in my congregation and family, now near thirty years; and, (I desire to speak it with all humility and thankfulness,) if ever the Lord smiled on my poor labours, it hath been whilst I have been busied in this great, useful, necessary work of catechising, and that out of these Catechisms.

ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS.

How these excellent Catechisms may be used to the best advantage by parents and governors of families, I have long since given Directions, which may be had at Mr. Parkhurst's, at the Bible and Three Crowns, near Mercers' chapel. And as to my dear and reverend brethren of the ministry, that would at the great day be publicly owned as pastors after God's own heart, such as have minded the flock more than the fleece, and in that flock the lambs as well as the sheep;—to these my brethren though I dare not presume to give advice, (what can my taper do to their sun, my drop to their stream?) yet they will give me leave to be their remembrancer. Dear brethren, who are to me as my own soul, our great and good God hath been pleased to honour us so far, as to set us up as stewards in his house, to give every one his proper portion in due season; and of all others, you know, our Master's will is that young ones be especially provided for. The duty, therefore, that we owe to God;—the love [that] we bear to truth, and to souls that are not capable of being saved without the knowledge of truth; to the souls of younger ones especially, who, if they be not taught the truth in their greener years, will more difficultly be brought to learn it when they are grown older;—nay, the love [that] we owe to our own souls, who must give a just account for every poor soul committed to our charge;—we, knowing how great a price the least lamb of our flock hath cost, how rich a prey Satan hath ever reckoned-on in the poorest soul, how industrious he is in hunting, how many nimble beagles he hath that rejoice to do their *best* in the *worst* service [in which] he lists to employ them, how great advantages they have at this time by the many sad and fatal breaches made in all our hedges;—surely, in the serious consideration of these and many more particulars, we shall, in the strength of our God, arise and be doing, and revive that most necessary exercise of catechising in the midst of us. “But how?”

1. *For advice at large*, and such as you will have cause to bless God for ever for, if you please to follow it, I refer you to that faithful and skilful workman, MR. BAXTER'S “Christian Directory,” fol. pp. 498, 509, 512, 515, 543, 582, and fourth part, p. 44.

2. *More particularly*:—

(1.) *Whatever you do in this work, you will do it soundly and purely.*—If ever a pastor will “in doctrine show uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,” let him do it in catechising: “Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed.” (Titus ii. 7, 8.) Give to babes “the sincere milk,” not sophisticated wine. (1 Peter ii. 2.)

(2.) *Do it plainly.*—So plainly, that he that runs may read and understand; so plainly, that none may excuse themselves at the day of judgment, and say, “Lord, we would have learned thy saving truths, but

they were too high, too hard, too difficult for us." Remember, the generality of people are very "dull of hearing," and "such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb. v. 11, 12.) Speak we therefore so as that our discourse may *rise* to the conviction of the wisest, but yet at the same time *sink and condescend* to the capacity of the meanest. I am apt to fear, that even then when we aim lowest, we yet at that very time shoot above not only the hearts, but heads, of our people.* Let our main care therefore be to open the understandings of our *catechumeni*. This is that which the Lord had in his eye, when he did not only command *the Levites* to instruct the children of Israel in the meaning of all his "statutes;" (Lev. x. 11;) but he laid this charge also upon *every parent*, to teach the children the meaning of every law and ordinance of God. (Exod. xii. 26, 27; xiii. 14; Deut. vi. 20.) If God required this under the law, much more now under the gospel, when it is promised that "the earth should be filled with the knowledge of God." (Isai. xi. 9.) The only service that is now acceptable unto God, is our "reasonable service;" (Rom. xii. 1;) that is, such service as is done unto him with reason and understanding. (Neh. viii. 2, 3.) The word read profits not unless understood. "Understandest thou what thou redest?" said Philip to the noble eunuch. (Acts viii. 30.) As if he had said, "To what purpose redest thou, if thou be not careful to understand what thou redest?" The word *preached* either by pastor or teacher, the truth delivered in a way of *catechising*, will do us no good, unless we hear with understanding. "Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand," saith the greatest Preacher; (Mark vii. 14;) and, "Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 51.) Dear brethren, as I know you desire not to sow your seed on the highway, so as that the fowls of that prince of the air should come and pick it up; (Matt. xiii. 19;) so be careful to make poor creatures to understand what they are taught. Now, for the opening of the truths laid down in "the Assembly's Catechism," I cannot but commend those four books which I have found so exceeding useful for the younger ones among our people; namely, Dr. Wallis's, Mr. Joseph Alleyn's, Mr. Thomas Vincent's, and Mr. Thomas Doolittle's excellent "Explanations."

(3.) *You will be sure to act very wisely, very discreetly.*—You know, in catechising you have to do with different sexes, ages, tempers, capacities. Some are less capable and more bashful: these must not be exposed to the scorn and contempt of those that have (it may be) more glib tongues and brasen foreheads, but worse hearts. You know when and how to encourage the willing, to praise the forward, to check the presumptuous, to admonish the unruly, patiently to bear with all. You know what it is *εκτρέφειν*, "to be soul-nurses;" (*τροφος*, 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8;) how to impart with all dearness those fundamental truths which make for their spiritual and eternal good and growth. And shall I take leave, in your names, to assure younger ones, that you will have a tender eye to the slowness of apprehension in some of them, to the slipperiness of memory in others, to the bashfulness of most, to the reputation of them all; that you will opportunely prevent their grosser mistakes, and candidly palliate their lesser ones; that you will give the best sense to the

worst of their answers, and put some necessary words into their mouths, the better to facilitate the expression of their thoughts; that you will so wisely manage the whole business, as that it may make for their reputation as well as instruction, and that they may find "favour both with God and man?"

(4.) *What you do, do it resolutely, and that in God's strength, not in your own.*—Expect opposition from within, from without. (i.) *From within*, a proud heart, apt to mutter: "It is a low, mean piece of drudgery." No; but [it is] rather the most doctor-like part of our work; and such as cannot accurately be performed without a clear insight into the greatest depths of religion, and a proportionable gift of ready exposition. The lowest principles of religion are the highest mysteries. Again: the tender shoulder, that shrugs, and enters its plea against the burden, as being "too troublesome a weight to be added to the load of our other Lord's-day labours." Neither will this prevail with you, brethren; we are confident, you are not only able, but "apt to teach." (2 Tim. ii. 24.) It is your joy "to spend" yourselves, "and be spent" in the utmost service of your God and his church. (2 Cor. xii. 15.) You will not be much concerned in the consuming of your oil, so you may lend your light. To such gracious souls as yours there is, there can be, no greater burden than the sense [which] you have of the heaviness of your people in hearing. (ii.) But *from without*, the general averseness of young ones is pleaded as a grand obstruction. As to that, you are so well seen in spiritual logic, as to fetch "meat out of this eater;" (Judges xiv. 14;) and will easily conclude, that this averseness in young ones from this exercise of catechising, is not the least argument of its singular usefulness. The more unwilling the patient is to have his wound opened, searched, plastered, and bound, the more eager the compassionate surgeon is to give relief. The more unwilling they are to present themselves to be catechised, the more reason have we to press them to it by the greatest violence of persuasion.

(5.) *Lastly. Let not want of success discourage.*—Your heavenly Master, you know, hath assured you that "your labour is not," shall not be, "in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.) God takes the measures of his servants, not from their success, which is *his sole work*; but from their sedulous and faithful endeavours, which is *their duty*. (2 Cor. viii. 12.) Go you on to "plant and water;" let the great Lord of the vineyard alone to "give the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) And know, you are "a sweet savour unto God;" (2 Cor. ii. 15;) and "though Israel be not gathered," but you seem to have spent your strength in vain, "yet surely your judgment is with the Lord, and your work and wages with your God." (Isaiah xlix. 4, 5.)

3. I have now done with the *particular directions*: there remain yet some more *general ones*, which, being observed, may, with God's blessing, much promote the success of this whole work. And so,

(1.) *To spiritual instruction, add holy admonition, exhortation, good advice, and counsel.*—Do not only let them know by instruction what their duty is, but press, urge, enforce this duty upon them by admonition and good counsel. "O my child! you see your duty, you know what you ought to do. O do according to what you know!" What a strong

powerful, prevailing influence hath good counsel when duly applied!
Only see,

(i.) That you *back your counsel with the clearest scripture, and most convincing arguments you can possibly*.—Good advice without these is but a bullet without powder, an arrow without a feather. Argue with them about the excellency of God, Christ, the Spirit, grace, the vanity of the creature, the folly and sinfulness 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.) Hear what Bathsheba saith to Solomon: "What, my son? and what, the son of my womb?" &c. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine," &c. (Prov. xxxi. 2—4.) Show them the beauty of Christ. Draw aside the curtain; let them behold the image of that blessed Saviour portrayed in scripture. Do to them as the spouse did to the daughters of Jerusalem; run over all the excellences of Christ to them, and then conclude: "He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." (Canticles v. 16.)

(ii.) *Labour as much as possible to insinuate yourselves into their affections*.—Having cleared your way into their heads, labour to wind and screw yourselves into their hearts. Let them know that you have no design upon them, but to make them happy; no private end, only their everlasting good. This done, thou hast done all thy work. When all jealousies of any sinister ends are blown away, then exhortations and counsels go down glybly. When persons are fully satisfied, that, in all our addresses to them, we study only their benefit and profit, this opens an effectual door to all the means that we shall use. Thus Paul accosts the Romans: "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." (Rom. i. 11.) Thus he smooths 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.) Labour then to get their love, their good esteem; and the work will thrive beyond expectation. Love is like the oiling of the key, which makes it to open the lock more easily; love greaseth the nail, and makes it enter with more facility.

(2.) *To holy, hearty, serious, affectionate, frequent admonition, add an exemplary conversation*.—Inferiors are apt to be led rather by example than rule, and are more prone to imitate practices than to learn principles. They are more mindful of what we do, than of what we say; and they will be very prone to suspect, that we are not in good earnest, when they see that we command them one thing, and do another ourselves. When we teach them well, and do amiss ourselves, we do but pull down with one hand what we build with the other; like a man that at the same time sings a lovely song, and drowns the melody of it by playing an ugly tune. When the father is immodest, the child that sees it soon grows impudent; and therefore the ancients thought themselves concerned to be very reserved and cautelous before their children.*

* Nil dictu fœdum visuque hæc limina tangat,
Intra quæ puer est. Procul hinc : . . .
Maxima debetur puero reverentia.—JUVENALIS *Satyra*, xiv. 44.

"Let nought which modest eyes or ears would shun
Approach the precincts that protect thy son!"

Walk as David, therefore, "within thy house with a perfect heart." (Psalm ci. 2.) Let thy children and servants behold nothing in thy department, which, if followed, may prove sinful.

(3.) *To an exemplary conversation add faithful, fervent, humble, constant supplication.* (Phil. i. 4; Col. i. 3.)—Paul, without ceasing, makes mention of his "heart's desire;" and his "prayer to God for Israel was, that they might be saved." (Rom. x. 1.) Ministers, like spiritual priests, should not fail to offer their daily sacrifices for their people, confess their iniquities, bewail their misery, and cry mightily to God for his mercy. All our instructions without prayer will do no good. Go to God to sanctify all. By prayer carry thy children, servants, to the blessed Jesus in the arms of faith; and beseech him to bless them, by laying on his hands on them, as Isaac did. (Gen. xxvii. 1—29; xlviii. 9, 14; with Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 16.) * How pathetically did Abraham plead with God for Ishmael! "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen. xvii. 18.) Bathsheba calls for Solomon, "the son of her vows." (Prov. xxxi. 1, 2.) Austin [was] the child of Monica's prayers and tears. O pray, then, pray earnestly: "O that this my son, daughter, servant, might not die for ever! Thou, Lord, art the Prince and Lord of life! O speak powerfully to their poor souls, that these pieces of my bowels, that are now dead in trespasses and sins, may hear thy voice and live!" Cry out to God, with that poor man in the gospel: "Lord, have mercy on my son!" (Matt. xvii. 15.) If a mother, do as the woman of Canaan did: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." If he seem not to hear, and to be silent; go nearer to him by faith, and cry: "Lord, help me! Lord, help me!" If his answer seem to be a repulse, do not thou desist, but rather gather arguments from his denial, as she did; and conclude, that if he once open his mouth, he will not shut his hand; and if importunity may prevail with an unrighteous man, then much more it will obtain with a gracious God. Never leave him, therefore, till, by laying hold on his own strength, thou hast overcome him. At last thou mayest hear that ravishing voice: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt;" and see thy daughter "made whole from that very hour." (Matt. xv. 21—28.)

(4.) Lastly. *To fervent supplication add wary inspection.*—Keep a strict hand and a watchful eye continually over those that are committed to your charge: † your utmost care and vigilancy in this will be found little enough. How soon will those gardens, that now look like a Paradise, be overgrown with weeds, if the keepers thereof do not look to them daily! How soon is childhood and youth tainted with sin, if it be not narrowly watched! "Be thou diligent, therefore, to know the state

Far be the revel from thy halls away,
And of carousing guests the wanton lay!
His child's unsullied purity demands
The deepest reverence at a parent's hands."—DR. BADHAM'S Translation.

* The accustomed ceremony used in blessing. BEZA in Matt. xix. 15. *Impositio manuum symbolum fuit apud Judæos familiare, quoties solennis erat precatio, vel benedictio.* "Among the Jews, the imposition of hands was a common domestic symbol, which was performed whenever the accustomed solemn prayer or benediction was pronounced."—EDIT.

† DR. JACOMB'S *Dom. Deo*, p. 83.

of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds." (Prov. xxvii. 23.) Carefully observe the natural temper of your inferiors; you will by this the better know how to apply yourselves to them in advice, reproof, correction. Observe the first sprouts and buds of what is either good or evil in them: encourage, commend, reward them in the one; curb, restrain, and prevent the further growth of the other. Do they begin to take God's name in vain? Do they nibble at a lie? Doth pride in apparel peep forth? Be sure to kill this serpent in the very egg, to crush this cockatrice in the shell.

Thus of superiors.

(II.) A word to INFERIORS, and I have done.

Dear lambs, the Searcher of hearts knows how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Shall I prevail with you to remember this, when I am laid with my fathers? namely, that it is no less your duty to make religion your business in the relation of children and servants, than it is ours in the relation of parents and masters. O what a credit, what a glory, is it to drink-in the dews of godliness in the morning of your lives! What a lovely sight to behold those trees blossoming with the fruits of the Spirit in the spring of their age! "Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king." (Eccles. iv. 13.) What a garland of honour doth the Holy Ghost put on the head of an holy child! How profitable is early piety! Some fruits ripe early in the year are worth treble the price of latter fruits. Godliness at any time brings-in much gain; (1 Tim. vi. 6;) but he that comes first to the market is likely to make the best price of his ware. On the other side, how dangerous are delays! Remember, children, Late repentance, like untimely fruits, seldom comes to any thing. Your lives are very uncertain. As young as you are, you may be old enough for a grave. O then seek your God, and seek him when and "while he may be found." (Isai. lv. 6.) If thou refuse him now, he may refuse thee hereafter.* I have heard of one, that, deferring repentance to his old age, and then going about it, heard a voice, *Des illi fufurem, cui dedisti farinam*; "Give him the bran to whom thou hast given the flour." Every day renders you more and more indisposed. The longer sin and Satan possess the forts of your hearts, the more they will fortify and strengthen them against God and holiness. (Jer. xiii. 23.) Your God deserves your youth. The best God deserves the best of days. Briefly: your God will call you to an account for your youth. (Eccles. xi. 9.) Here is a cooler for the high-flown youngster's courage. The words, after an ironical concession, thunder out a most dreadful commination. Well, then, be persuaded truly to reverence and honour your parents, masters, ministers. (Mal. i. 6; Eph. vi. 2; Lev. xix. 3.) Even lambs will kneel to their dams. Reverence them *inwardly* in your hearts with an awful fear; *outwardly* in your lives, in language and in carriage. (Gen. xlviii. 12; 1 Kings ii. 19.) Obey your superiors. (Eph. vi. 1.) In a word, read Prov. ii. 1—6: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea,

* We read of one that truly repented at his last gasp, that so none might despair; but it is of *but one*, that none might presume.

if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

Up, therefore, and be doing; and "the blessing of Him that dwelt in the bush" shall be with you.

SERMON XII.

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HOW MAY IT APPEAR TO BE EVERY CHRISTIAN'S INDISPENSABLE
DUTY TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

This do in remembrance of me.—1 Corinthians xi. 24.

THESE words are a command of the Lord Jesus, received, through revelation, by the apostle Paul, and by him as Christ's herald proclaimed to the church, that not only this particular church of Corinth, but that the whole catholic church of Christ, in their successive generations until his second coming, might take notice thereof, and yield obedience thereto, as to a command of that nature, wherein very much of the glory of their once-crucified Redeemer, and their own spiritual joy and consolation, is concerned. This will further appear in the following explication of the words.

In the words you have four parts, two of which are expressed, and the other two implied.

I. A duty: "This do."

II. The end for which: "In remembrance of me."

III. The obligation to the duty: *Christ's command*: this is implied.

IV. The persons under the obligation: *the whole church catholic militant, so far as they are scripturally capacitated thereto*: this likewise is implied.

But of these in their order.

I. *The duty*: "This do."—What is this to be done? The apostle tells you in the beginning of this verse, and in the following verse: and it is this: "This broken bread take and eat; this cup take and drink."

Here is a duty, my brethren, so plain, so easy, of whose obscurity or difficulty certainly we have no cause to complain.

For what can be less obscure than a command so evidently expressed, and what more easy than to eat and drink, and call to mind the greatest and best of friends, "that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood?" (Rev. i. 5.) And surely, then, a neglect herein must needs prove a sin that will admit of no excuse.

But if any of you be offended at the outward meanness of the ordi-