

womb? God is the framer of all mankind, the small as well as the great, and that equally in the same kind and in the same way, whatever difference of state there be afterward. Now when God exalts men, they should be mindful of this, if set afar above others by the Lord's grace; therefore they should not bear it high against the meanest; they are their own flesh.

(2.) A possible equality in the course of God's providence: Heb. xiii. 3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.' Before we go out of the body there may be strange changes. As the Shunamite, who told the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 13, 'She dwelt among her own people,' and therefore thought she had no need of the prophet; yet within a while she had need of the prophet's man, when she came and cried to the king for her house and for her land, 2 Kings viii. 5. Well, then, this mutual submission is necessary for us; not only as we are christians, but as we are men.

[5.] We have one Lord to whom we must be accountable: Job xxxi. 14, 'What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' There is a religious account besides a natural. Though some are set higher than others, yet God is infinitely high above them all: Eccles. v. 8, 'For he that is higher than the highest, regardeth; and there be higher than they.' Now those that know this will tremble to do wrong to the least.

*Use 1.* To show how much the christian religion befriendeth human societies; for we owe duties one to another in our several stations. It is neither injurious to princes nor subjects, but it commandeth every one to do good according to his calling.

2. Where the fear of God is rooted in the heart of any, it will make him tender and careful of his duty to man, and from a right principle and motive, and in a right manner, and to a right end.

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## SERMON XXVII.

*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

EPH. v. 22.

THERE is a general complaint of people's faultiness in their relation; they have been so long untrue to God, that now they are grown unfaithful to one another. It concerneth us to stop this growing mischief. Ministers should not be accessory to this common depravation of manners by their silence. Let us warn them of their duty, whatever cometh of it; and therefore, having continued my discourse on the several verses of this chapter hitherto, I would not dare to break it off here. The apostle having laid down general duties which belong to all christians, he cometh to particular precepts that concern the well ordering of domestical society. Every complete family consists of three pair of relations—husband, wife; parents, children; masters and ser-

vants. The first relation, between husband and wife, is the chiefest, which is the foundation of the rest ; therefore he beginneth with them. And first with the duty of the wife, because it is more easy to perform the duty of love than subjection. To love is sweet, but to obey tedious. Besides, by the obedience of the wife the husband is the sooner induced to love her. The submission of the inferior is a strong motive to the superior to do his part. Therefore he begins with the wife, and saith, 'Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.'

In the words there are—

1. The duty of the wife, 'Wives, submit yourselves.'
2. The persons to whom it is to be performed, 'To your own husbands.'
3. The manner how, 'As unto the Lord.'

1. For the duty, 'Submit yourselves.' Subjection in the general on God's part noteth the subordination of one creature to another according to his wise disposal, as the imperfect to the more perfect, and this for the good of both ; for it is so ordered, that in all relations comfort and duty shall go together. On our part it is a ready inclination to obey this order set by God ; for every creature must know his place, and be content with the order wherein God hath set him. According to this order, submission is required of the wife towards her husband ; for though she is not to be subject as children to their parents, much less as servants to their masters ; no, this subjection is more free and ingenuous ; for there is a greater co-ordination between husband and wife than other relations. There is a *συζυγία*, they draw as fellows in the same yoke ; yet subject she must be ; for there can be no order kept in the family unless all the rest be subject to the father of the family. Therefore this authority which the husband hath over the wife is such as is necessary to the order of the family, and the safe and prudent management of affairs herein, and also their comfortable cohabitation with each other ; and so this subjection is no more than is convenient, equitable, and just.

2. The persons, 'To your own husbands.' This is as often repeated as the precept is repeated, and is mentioned partly to note loyalty and chastity. She is to submit, not to the adulterer, but such as they are bound to by their own choice and conjugal covenant. And partly to prevent tyranny. She is to be subject to her own husband, not to the strange woman introduced into the family to usurp the rights of marriage.

3. The manner how it is to be done, 'As unto the Lord.' By the Lord is meant Christ ; and the particle *as* is a note of similitude, not of equality ; for the husband's authority is not equal with that of Christ. This clause importeth many things.

[1.] The regulation of the duty ; it must be done willingly and sincerely, resembling that submission which is performed to Christ, whose image, in his government over the church, the husband beareth in his superiority over the wife. God hath power to dispose of his own creatures as he pleaseth, and as he is obeyed by the servant in the person of his master : Eph. vi. 5, 'Be obedient to your masters as unto Christ ;' and again, ver. 7, 'Doing service to the Lord' ; so he is obeyed by the wife in the person of the husband, who therein is his image : 1 Cor.

xi. 3, 'I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God;' that is to say, Christ in respect of his office of mediator, is under God, but above all men; so the man being under Christ, is above all women. Well, then, as we should be obedient unto Christ willingly, heartily, and sincerely, so must the woman be obedient to her husband, who is an emblem of his superiority and power.

[2.] It may import the enforcement, the reason and motive of this duty, because Christ hath commanded it; and by virtue of the law of Christ all wives must be subject to their husbands; which doth not disannul, but confirm God's institution, for his precepts are not privative, but accumulative. It is good to see how this duty hath been enforced, first as natural, then as penal, lastly, as comfortable. First, as natural, by the law of nature: 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 'The women are to be in obedience, as also saith the law.' Where, besides God's positive precept, the apostle urgeth the law of nature, 'they ought,' 'as also saith the law.' Secondly, it hath been urged as penal: Gen. iii. 16, when the woman had sinned, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' If there be anything grievous in it, it was introduced by sin. Therefore if this subjection be not so free as before the fall, but joined with sorrow and difficulty, they must remember what occasioned it. Then, lastly, it is urged as comfortable, as required by the law of Christ, and resembling the communion between Christ and the church; for so it is spoken of everywhere in this chapter. Well, then, the woman is first to subject herself to Christ, and in love to him to subject herself to her husband.

[3.] 'As unto the Lord' implieth a limitation; this subjection must be in all things which belong to the lawful authority and superiority of the husband; for so it seemeth to be expressed, Col. iii. 18, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.' All fitting obedience must be yielded to him, so far as Christ hath given the husband power over the wife.

[4.] It importeth Christ's acceptance of this duty. He interpreteth this subjection and obedience as given to himself, and the contrary as rebellion against himself; for it is service done to Christ: which may give the woman comfort against all unkindnesses, and unthankful returns from her husband. She is obedient, but the husband froward; but Christ will recompense this dutiful submission, though the husband do not.

*Doct.* That wives must reckon it their unquestionable duty to be subject to their husbands.

Let me show you—(1.) Wherein this subjection consisteth; (2.) The reasons and grounds of it.

I. Wherein it consisteth. To speak briefly of it, this subjection lieth in two things—in reverence and obedience.

1. In reverence, which is both inward and outward.

[1.] The inward, in a due esteem of the husband, which is the ground of all love and submission. So it is said, Eph. v. 33, 'Let the woman reverence her husband.' If for nothing else, yet in a humble acknowledgment of his right by God's ordinance; for esteem is not only due to personal qualifications, but to the eminent dignity wherein

God hath placed any creature with whom we have commerce; and if we cannot acknowledge them for any worth in them, yet we must acknowledge God in them, who hath put his image of superiority upon them, that we may the better discharge our duties to them.

[2.] Outward reverence is both in word and deed. First, in word, by a reverent speaking of them and to them; for the Holy Ghost taketh notice of this: 1 Peter iii. 6, 'Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.' Sarah testifieth her obedience and dutiful carriage to her husband by her respectful language to him and of him. The Lord taketh notice of the least act of sincere obedience to his commands, even when it is mixed with many sinful failings. The whole passage from whence this is taken savoured of unbelief: Gen. xviii. 12, 'After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?' There is nothing commendable but that one word which expresseth her reverence of her husband, and yet she is commended as one of the holy women trusting in God; and from thence the apostle inferreth how much women should give reverence to their wicked and infidel husbands, for that is the case in hand. Secondly, in deed; their behaviour towards them should be far from all irreverence and contempt; as it is taken notice of as a wicked practice in Michal, that her husband was despised in her eyes when he testified his religious joy by dancing before the ark; and therefore God smote her with barrenness till the day of her death, 2 Sam. vi. 20, with 23. She upbraids him, and mocketh him: 'How glorious was the king of Israel to-day!' as if he had behaved himself not like a king, but one of the rascal multitude. Mark, it is said in the 16th verse that first 'she despised him in her heart,' and then taunts at him, and uttereth her contempt by scornful and proud upbraiding. When their love is stabbed at the heart, the outward carriage will not be dutiful, but contemptuous and scornful. But doth God pass by this breach of matrimonial duty? No; she procured from God a sore punishment; she continued barren to the day of her death, and her crime is registered with the black coal of infamy to all posterity.

2. Obedience; that is showed in many things.

[1.] In studying to please rather than to be pleased; for the apostle telleth us that 'she that is married careth for the things of this world, that she may please her husband,' 1 Cor. vii. 34; that is, counts it part of her calling to take her part and care of domestical affairs, that she may be pleasing and acceptable to her husband.

[2.] By fulfilling his commands in all things lawful, and not contrary to her duty to God: Titus ii. 5, 'Let wives be obedient to their own husbands.' And this not with a grudging, discontented sullenness; as Zipporah, in circumcising her son, cast the foreskin at Moses' feet, saying, 'Surely a bloody husband art thou to me,' Exod. iv. 25, by way of angry upbraiding him, that such severity must be exercised on her son; at least that is the meaning our translation seemeth to hold forth. But with readiness and willingness, as a duty to be performed as unto God, who will be served not by constraint, but with a ready mind; and therefore they must obey not out of necessity, but conscionably, and with all cheerfulness. Instances of this we have in holy women who trusted in God; as Sarah followed Abraham when he went into a

strange country, and was partaker with him of the blessings there, Gen. xii. 5; and in entertaining the angels, Gen. xviii. 6. When Abraham said unto Sarah, 'Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, and knead it quickly, and make cakes upon the hearth'; we find no disputing and gainsaying of these commands, but a ready obedience is presupposed, which all good women should imitate.

[3.] By submitting her will to her husband's content, and her desires to his approbation and allowance: Gen. iii. 16, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband,' that is, subject to him, 'and he shall bear rule over thee.' This is one clause in the woman's censure after the transgression; and we can neither make God's laws straiter nor larger than they are, and therefore the woman must be content with the duty God hath imposed on her.

[4.] In patience under his rebukes. So the apostle: 1 Tim. ii. 12, 'But I suffer not a woman to teach, and to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.' The apostle giveth directions there concerning the woman's public and domestical carriage. As to her public carriage, 'I suffer her not to speak in the church,' *οὐδε ἀθροεῖν ἀνδρός*, that is the word; not to carry it as if her will were authentic, or the rule of the family, but, in opposition to both, she is to be 'in silence;' as not to teach in the church, so at home to be obedient without replying or countermanding. And that is the reason why a meek and quiet spirit is so much commended as an ornament of a gracious woman: 1 Peter iii. 4, 'The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.' Meekness and quietness is chiefly exercised in bridling our passions, when anything falleth out cross and contrary to our desires and expectations, and we eschew all needless contradiction and expressions of malcontentedness. Now this is not only gaining upon the husband, but is very acceptable to God, who delighteth in the graces he hath wrought in his own people. But now, on the contrary, a humorous moroseness and impatiency is very displeasing unto God and man, and destructive of family society: Prov. xiii. 19, 'A contentious wife is a continual dropping.' As the coming in of the rain in a ruinous house doth founder it, and rot it more and more, and nothing can be preserved from hurt by reason of it, so there is no safety nor comfort in cohabitation with those of that temper. So again, Prov. xxvii. 15, 16, 'A continual dropping in a rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike. Whosoever hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand which bewrayeth itself;' that is, a brawling woman is so fierce, that a man can no more tame her than shut up the wind in the hollow of his fist, nor hide the smell of a fragrant ointment when he hath it in his hand; so ready they are to show their petulancy upon all occasions.

[5.] By being a comfort and a help to him: Gen. ii. 18, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.' The woman is to be a help, not a hindrance; not the governor, for the right is originally in the man, but a help in government, to ease him in part of his burden and cares; a help every way, for the comfort of society, for assistance in governing the family, for the increasing and for the propagation and continuance of posterity; for these uses was the woman created, and intended by God, though by sin afterward she

became a snare to him. Well, then, this is her office and duty of service still, which by God she is deputed unto. She is to be a help before him, that is, to minister unto him; as when they sought a wife for David: 1 Kings i. 2, 'One that may stand before the king.' Now this is the duty of all good wives: Prov. xxxi. 12, 'She will do him good, not evil, all the days of her life;' that is, she studieth to do good to her husband, and to prevent the evil that may come unto him; whereas foolish wives pluck down the house they should build up, Prov. xiv. 1, proving moths in their husband's estates by their idleness and wastefulness; thorns in their sides, vexing those whom they should comfort; snares, by perverting those whom they should draw to God and quicken in godliness, corrupting the children and family whom they should instruct. In short, this we learn by this point, that the woman is not man's guide, but his help; and those abilities which God hath given her are for obedience, not for government; the man being ruler and governor, but the wife is his helper and partner in the cares of the family. Assistance is her business, not chief command.

[6.] In not disposing servants or the estate without the husband's leave or consent. Servants: when Sarah thought herself wronged or despised by Hagar, yet she puts her not away till she had sought the husband's permission, and made her complaint to him: Gen. xvi. 6, 'Behold, thy maid is in thy hand;' before she could do nothing to her. But now as to the disposing of the estate there is a greater difficulty. Certain it is she may not take wastefully of her husband's substance to spend at her pleasure; but she is not utterly barred of works of mercy; for this duty lieth upon all: 'To communicate and distribute forget not.' And it is said of the good wife, Prov. xxxi. 20, 'She stretcheth forth her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.' She hath not only some small pittance to give to the poor, but a larger bounty for the needy and deeply necessitous; therefore it is said, 'She reacheth out her hands;' that is, distributeth to them in a more plentiful measure. And we read, Luke viii. 3, that 'Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, ministered unto him of their substance;' that is, supplied him with necessaries. Our Lord Jesus could have given them more than he received, but he would leave an example. Now whence this stream of bounty should be fed, whether of that which is personally their own and reserved in marriage, or by express leave and consent of the husband, as the Shunamite sought her husband's consent to entertain the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 8-10, or by general consent, when his heart trusts in her, and he referreth things to her discretion, or she being bound to show mercy as well as the husband, she has not so far a joint interest in the estate to convert some of it discreetly and wisely to holy and charitable uses; whether from one or all these, I will not now dispute. The discussion might do more hurt than good, because of the unseasonableness and the calumnies of evil-minded persons.

II. The grounds and reasons.

1. The law of nature written by God's own finger in the hearts of men. We read of those who were heathens, that they enacted a law and decree: Esther i. 20, 22, 'That every man should bear rule in his

own house ; and that all the women should give honour to the husband, both great and small ;' and that upon the queen's not vouchsafing to come to the king when he sent for her, they thought it an example of an evil taint, and pernicious to their household power. Indeed both anciently and to this very day, great is the power of the husbands over their wives in Persia. Now shall heathens see that which christians do not ?

2. God's ordination, which a holy heart dareth not disobey. Now God hath expressly commanded it in his word in the text ; so Col. iii. 18, ' Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord ;' Titus ii. 5, ' To be obedient to their own husbands ;' 1 Peter iii. 1, ' Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands.' And where not ? A gracious heart will say, If God hath required me to be subject, I will be subject. They dare not enlarge themselves where God hath straitened them. The sight of God's will is instead of all reasons ; as for their duty in general : 1 Thes. iv. 3, ' For this is the will of God, even your sanctification ;' so for this particular duty of obedience to superiors : 1 Peter ii. 15, ' So is the will of God, that ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' Well, then, if God, who hath the power of disposing of his creatures, and who is to be obeyed in the person of the husband, hath commanded this, this silenceth all debates and mutterings to the contrary.

3. The natural imperfection of the woman. The apostle calleth her ' the weaker vessel,' 1 Peter iii. 7. Abilities of mind are not ordinarily so strong in her as in the man ; and they have fewer opportunities than man hath for perfecting their natural parts ; and they are not so able to provide for themselves, modesty not permitting them to go up and down in the world. Therefore though God would have them copartners with the man in the good things of this life, yet he hath entrusted the government in the hands of the man.

4. The manner and order of the creation. The woman was made after man, out of man, and for man. God formed man first, and then the woman out of him, and for man's good. This reason is urged by the apostle : 1 Tim. ii. 13, ' For Adam was first formed, then Eve ;' 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9, ' For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.' This noteth her subordination and dependence on him : ' After man ;' therefore man must be superior.

You will say then, The birds and beasts should be preferred, for they were created before either.

*Ans.* The apostle speaketh of the same kind, not of diverse ; but ' of man,' and not he of her. Therefore even in innocency was she subject to Adam, though then without grief and molestation : ' For man,' as appears from the end of the creation of the woman, which was to be a help and comfort to him ; for whatever serveth to any end is lesser than the end for which it serveth.

5. From the woman's being first in the transgression ; for this is a part of the sentence, Gen. iii. 16, ' He shall bear rule over thee.' There is little reason that the course settled in the creation should be changed after the fall ; for the woman was first seduced, and then draweth her husband into the fellowship of the sin. Therefore God in effect telleth

her, Since thou canst not rule thyself, meet it is that thou shouldst be put under the rule and power of another. The apostle deduceth this subjection from the same ground: 1 Tim. ii. 14, 'But Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was first in the transgression;' that is, Adam was not first deceived, but Eve; she was first cheated by the serpent, and so a cause and beginning of ruin on all mankind; therefore it is equal ever afterwards that the woman should obey the man, because the man perished by hearkening to the wife: her honour was first lost.

6. The inconveniences that would ensue if this subjection were taken away. There must be order in every society, without which there followeth division, and thereupon confusion; and a house divided cannot stand. Now the fittest to govern the family is the husband, who is the most worthy, being created after the image of God, and the woman after the image of the man. We see *pax est tranquillitas ordinis*; trouble the order of nature, and presently great inconveniences follow, thunders, earthquakes, inundations; so disturb the order of due subjection in a family, and then nothing but strife, clamours, mutual jealousies.

*Use 1.* Is reproof to several sorts.

1. Of all those frothy and profane wits who scoff at women's subjection, and make it a matter of unsavoury mirth. See how misbecoming christians this is, partly as it is a duty required by God. Should any of God's laws be made matter of laughter and derision to us? This is to make mock of sin, which is the guise of atheistical fools, Prov. xiv. 9; for if we scoff at the law that forbiddeth it, we make the transgression a mere matter of laughter. I am sure it weakeneth our reverence of God's precepts. Partly as it is a great duty which enforceth all the rest. For our easier and shorter direction, the scripture compriseth all the duty of the wife in one word, 'submission;' as all the duty of the husband in the word 'love.' And what God intended for a help, shall we turn it into matter of laughter? Let the woman submit to her husband, and she will not stick at other duties; as, let the husband love his wife, and all family converse will be easy. Now should we strike at all conjugal duties, and stab them at the heart, as they do that weaken that reverence which belongeth to the fundamental duties, by making matter of sport of them? Once more, the occasion on which God revived this precept should intimate graver thoughts; for it was upon the woman's being first in the transgression which was the fountain of all our miseries. Now the remembrance of the fall of our first parents should check all profane and unsavoury mirth, rather than feed it.

2. It reproveth those that dispute against it by manifold cavils; but no reasoning must be allowed against a plain and known duty. Therefore, to prevent these disputes, let me lay down two conclusions—

[1.] On the wife's part; no privilege of birth, parts, breeding, can exempt her from it. If she be a wife, whatever she be, she must be in subjection to her own husband. We cannot dispense with God's ordinance. She still ought to look upon her husband as one placed by God in a degree of superiority above her; and the law of nature, and the ordinance of God, and her own covenant, bind her to submission and



dutifulness to him. God hath not said, Such women shall be subject, and such not, but speaketh to all indefinitely: 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.' If any have peculiar gifts of wisdom and prudence, it is to make them the more serviceable, and to cover and supply their husband's defects; as Abigail did Nabal's.

[2.] On the husband's part; no personal infirmity, no frowardness of nature, no error in religion (1 Cor. vii. 13), deprives him of it. The husband's wickedness and disobedience to the gospel doth not lessen the relation, or vacate the duty belonging thereunto. No; rather the conscientious party is more strictly tied to a faithful discharge of their duty, to gain upon the other party. The relation is only loosened in case of adultery, and lawful divorce thereupon, Mat. v. 32, or wilful desertion, 1 Cor. vii. 15. In other cases you must bear your burden. If you object, 'They are unfit; you should not have chosen such to rule you; but having chosen them, you must assist them the best you can in a dutiful, not a masterly way.

3. It reproveth them that have no reason to allege but their own imperious and peevish humour causeth them to live discontentedly and disobediently in this relation; they stand in no awe of their husbands, and will not be subject. These live in plain rebellion and defiance of God's ordinance; and they should bethink themselves how it will stand with the profession they make of being christians, or what account they shall give in the judgment, when they are to pass their doom and trial, how they have glorified God in this relation; what they have done as wives for his honour.

4. It reproveth those husbands that by their own default lose their authority and dignity, and are themselves causes that their own power is lessened and diminished, either by their intemperance, behaving themselves as beasts rather than men, that they are altogether unfit to judge what is meet and good for the family; so that if the prudent wife did not contribute her assistance, all would go to ruin; or by their faulty easiness, giving way to evil; as Adam permitted himself to be seduced by his wife, and Jezebel's overruling her husband Ahab in the matter of Naboth's vineyard, which proved both the ruin of her, and her husband, and the whole family, 1 Kings xxi. 7, 22-24. It is true the husband is to govern not by fear, but by love. He is the image of Christ in governing his church, and the wife is not a slave, but a meet help; but this love should not be a snare to him. And it is true the wife should not be despised, for God saith to Abraham, 'Hearken to the voice of Sarah.' But there is a difference between hearkening to good counsel, and swallowing a temptation, and being driven to evil by the woman's imperiousness.

*Use 2.* Is to exhort wives to submit to their own husbands.

Here I shall take notice—(1.) Of the impediments; (2.) The motives.

1. The impediments.

[1.] *Pride.* When they think of their own birth, beauty, wisdom, beyond what is meet, and so take upon them more than they ought, contemning the husband's authority; but they should remember their duty dependeth not upon their birth, beauty, portion, but God's ordinance. On this is founded the husband's authority, and subjec-

tion of the wife, which neither can nor ought to be abrogated and changed by these accidental things. They should also consider that pride is no great sign of their worth, and these are soonest blown up, and it is conceit rather than solid worth, and that this motive of pride is from the devil to draw them into rebellion against God.

[2.] A defect of true love; for love maketh all services easy and cordial: Gen. xxiv. 20, 'Jacob's seven years seemed to him but a few days;' Ps. cxix. 167, 'My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.' And it is so to a woman also; she that loveth will study to please, for love will always mind us of our duty. Therefore parents should not force their children to marry whom they do not love: Gen. xxiv. 57, 58, 'We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.' Let them also take care of themselves, that they do not for honour or riches make choice of such husbands as they cannot love; and after marriage let them avoid all, even the lightest, causes of offence. Things glued together may be easily disjointed. God must be sought to keep up this love; especially let it not be weakened by impure and straggling thoughts.

[3.] Affectation of vanity; for a vain woman will never attend to these household duties which belong to conjugal subjection, but will either be gadding abroad to see and to be seen, affecting great pomp of living, as costly array, vanity of fashions, and other things than will stand with the profit of the family. The vain woman is described, Prov. vii. 12, 'Now she is without, now she is in the street, waiting in every corner.' Now they that are sick of vanities care neither for husband, children, nor family; and therefore let women watch against this evil. The apostle directeth them to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, 2 Tim. ii. 9.

[4.] Want of self-denial. Self-denial, as it maketh churches and kingdoms happy, so it maketh families happy, when every one in their place is willing to bear a part of the burden; this maketh us fit to serve one another; as the apostle: 1 Cor. x. 33, 'As I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own things, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' So *mutatis mutandis*, proportionably should the christian wife say. When we can deny self-will and self-ends, no duties will be burdensome to us. Now self-denial is so essential to christianity, and, though it be troublesome to the flesh, bringeth such comfort and peace into our consciences, that no good christian should be without it; especially the woman, who by her state of life is not ordinarily exposed to public hazards, should not be without this character of Christ's disciples, self-denial.

## 2. Motives.

[1.] It is easier and safer to obey than to prescribe and direct, and more felicity is found in obedience than in commands; and in the event it is found more safe; as Zipporah, by obeying her husband in circumcising the child, saved his life, Exod. iv. 26.

[2.] It is better to give the husband occasion of thanksgiving than of complaining: James v. 9, 'Grudge not one against another, lest ye be condemned,' μή στενάζετε; especially in superiors: Heb. xiii. 7, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may

do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.' So in other relations God expecteth honour: Prov. xviii. 22, 'Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour from the Lord;' Prov. xix. 14, 'Houses and riches are the inheritance of our fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.'

[3.] Your own peace, that your 'prayers may not be interrupted,' 1 Peter iii. 7.

[4.] Honour to God. (1.) It takes away the reproach of the gospel: Titus ii. 5, 'Obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed;' that christian religion may not be thought to impose anything contrary to moral virtues. (2.) That gainsayers may be won to God: 1 Peter iii. 1, 'Ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.'

### SERMON XXVIII.

*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body.*—EPH. v. 23.

THE words contain a reason of the foregoing precept, both of the matter and manner of the duty. Why subject to their 'own husbands?' Why, 'as unto the Lord?' The reason is taken from the resemblance which the husband carrieth in family government to Christ.

In them observe three things—(1.) What the husband is to the wife; (2.) What Christ is to the church; (3.) The resemblance between the one and the other, 'Even as Christ.' There is a similitude, though not an exact equality in the case.

In handling of this scripture, we must first speak of Christ's relation to his church, and then of the husband's relation to the wife; for first we must consider the pattern before we can state the resemblance.

In the pattern two relations are mentioned; 'Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body.' These titles which are given to Christ I shall speak of—(1.) Conjunctly; (2.) Separately and apart.

1. Conjunctly. Christ is both head and saviour; he is a head to rule and govern his people, and a saviour to help, succour, and protect them. The word *head* showeth the power wherewith he is invested to command, direct, and order the church. And the other word, *saviour*, implieth our benefit, and the good that we have by his government. He is such a saviour that he is also a head; such a head that he is also a saviour. It is obvious and easy to observe, in Christ's style and title, a mixture of words that imply power and sovereignty and also goodness and mercy; some that intimate privilege to us, others that bespeak duty and obedience; as Acts ii. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both lord and Christ.' He is Lord, supreme