

Monergism

**AN EARNEST CALL  
— TO —  
FAMILY RELIGION**

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING FAMILY WORSHIP.



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# **AN EARNEST CALL TO FAMILY RELIGION**

Or, a Discourse Concerning Family Worship.

Being the Substance of Eighteen Sermons.

Preached by SAMUEL SLATER,

A.M. Minister of the Gospel.

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## **The Epistle Dedicatory.**

To that Church of Christ which Meets at Crosby-Square in London.

Dearly Beloved in our Lord,

Our Blessed God is what he was, and will be what he is, without variableness or shadow of turning, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, is the same yesterday, and today, and forever; Godliness also is the same in its Nature and Work, in its Excellency and Glory. The Reward which followeth after is the same likewise, no less than an undisturbed rest, and joy unspeakable, a Crown of Life, an exceeding weight of Glory, together with a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. But alas! Alas! There is a wonderful abatement and decay in the Practical part of Religion, and an apparent vast difference between the generality of Professors at this day, and those who lived in former

times. The Sun hath gone ten degrees backward, we have quarreled and, fought, disputed, and wrangled the life and power of Godliness almost out of the Nation. There is indeed something of an empty formal Religion abroad, but there is very little or none of the Truth and Power at home. There is so little done for God in the Houses of many who call themselves Christians, that one would take them not for Christians, but Atheists, and conclude them without God in the World, yea, and that altogether; for there is no Praying in their Families, no Reading of the Scriptures, no Singing of Psalms, no Repeating of Sermons, no Catechizing of young ones, who would not take these for Heathens, if they did not call themselves something else?

It was certainly of God, and I hope in Love to this poor, but dear City (the place of my Nativity) that there lately was such a ready and general agreement among the Dissenting Ministers, at the same time in their several Congregations to Preach up Family-Piety, and Worshiping of God. That very thing afforded to me great matter of rejoicing, and no small ground of hope that God will not yet break up House, nor deprive us of his Gospel-presence, which is far more desirable, because incomparably more worth than all the World; for if the Ark be lost, other things will go with it; but what ever else remains, we may well write Ichabod upon London, and if there, then upon England, for the Glory is departed from them. But amidst the bad Symptoms that are among us, there are two of a benign and kind aspect, viz. the Magistrates encouraging the suppression of Profaneness, and the Ministers endeavoring the advancement of Godliness; among the rest of my Brethren I applied myself to the work, looking up to the ever blessed God for assistance, without whom I know myself able to do nothing; but he was not wanting to his poor unworthy Servant, but graciously pleased to come in, and make his power known.

Before I had waded far and Preached often upon the Subject, I heard many were much affected, and several of you signified your desire (wherein as you said, you were not alone) that when this Discourse was finished it might be published. I am not so foolish as to be ambitious of appearing in Print, that indeed is Vain-Glory. I have also reason to know how difficult a work it is for him who hath his full load already, to prepare so many Sermons for the Press, and to be in daily expectation of Dunning by the Printer, yet could I not find in my heart to deny you, from and for whom I have so great a dearness of affection. Your desire could not but obtain being armed and backed with powerful Considerations, for it could not but be very pleasant to me to hear that wholesome Truths and Counsels dished in by me, though poorly dressed by so mean a Cook, should as savory Meat, find so great acceptance, and be so very sweet to your taste; also it delighted me to argue and conclude thus. Surely these my Friends that are so pleased with the Doctrine, are not strangers to the Practice, but they and their Houses do serve the Lord. And there was a third thing, which like a dead weight carried it, it perfectly conquered all my averseness, gained my consent, and of unwilling rendered me free; viz. Your confident persuasion that the good this Discourse will do, will abundantly compensate the pains that I must necessarily take about it, not liking the bitterness of Passive Obedience, and letting it alone as long as I can, I was hereby brought to be at perfect peace with a Non-Resistance in the present case.

I have now done my Part, and the Printer his; your desire is accomplished, the Book you see abroad, may your hope and expectation be accomplished too. May these Sermons of mine, so far as they convey the truths of God, be as sweet to all that shall read them, as they were to you in the hearing, though as I must confess, that is too great a wish, a thing scarce to be looked for; since as a late Worthy Writer observed, there is as much difference between

Sermons Preached, and Sermons Printed, as there is between Milk in the Breast, and Milk in the Bottle. Yet I am sure of this, that they will be full out as sweet to them that shall read them, as they were to you when you heard them, if the Divine and All-quickenning Spirit will graciously vouchsafe to take them and Preach them to their hearts; and of this also I am no less sure, that they will be found having in them a delicious sweetness, by all those upon whom they shall fall with an overcoming power. And that is it, yea, that is it which I do heartily beg, and gladly would obtain for you that are my Charge, viz. That all those Scripture Truths, which being sent of my great and glorious Master I bring you, and in which your precious Souls are most nearly and everlastingly concerned, may come not in word only, but in power; you, like Metal cast into the Mold, being delivered up to that form of Doctrine which is delivered unto you, in order to your being informed by it, conformed to it, and transformed by the renewing of the Spirit of your Mind, and so be able to say, this is true in the Scripture, and it is so in me; this I hear, and this I feel, this God hath spoken, and this I believe; thus I am commanded, and thus I live, thus I do. This, and that, and the other the Ministers of Christ tell me is my Duty, and prove it such, and my Conscience bears me witness that it is my delight.

The good Lord hide Pride from every one of you, it is so odious a thing, that it looks well in nobody; may you be as knowing, as loving, and as well accomplished a People as any in the World. May you have the dew of Heaven, and the fatness of the Earth, may you be richly stored with grace, and come behind in no gift, thoroughly furnished for every good work, yea, and filled with all the fullness of God; but withal, be very humble, great in value and usefulness, but little in your own eyes, that will not be to your loss, but much to your advantage, for God gives grace to the Humble, and no less to your Honor; Humility eclipseth and obscures no Mans glory, but sets a

singular luster and gloss upon it, making it shine with a greater brightness. Holy and Humble Paul was one of the most Eminent Servants God ever had in the World, and his speaking of himself as being less than the least of all Saints, detracted nothing from his real worth, nor did it hinder his being equal with the chief of the Apostles, if we may speak of a chief among them; among whom our Lord appointed a Parity; at that time there was no such thing as a Pope.

I would not speak one word to swell or puff any of you up, if you study and know yourselves as you ought, you will soon find defects, infirmities, corruptions enough to keep the best of you down, yet I cannot but say you are my Joy, and Crown, and as I do every day make mention of you in my Prayers; so I can, and frequently do bless and give thanks to my God upon my remembrance of you, and that upon sundry accounts, which I speak of for your encouragement, and the promoting your farther progress. I have reason to hope it is the true grace of God in which you stand, and as you have a Name to live, so you have been made partakers of the Life itself; for as you do all make a good and excellent Profession; so I know none of you that stain and contradict it by a scandalous walking. You have been steadfast in shaking and falling Times; some did indeed go off in the Days of sore Persecution, not having on the whole Armor of God, nor being able to endure Hardship as the good Soldiers of Jesus, but they were few, so few that we did not miss them, we do not want them; the Lord grant that they may find Mercy of the Lord at the great Day, I shall be glad to meet them in Heaven. You have received and owned me as an Angel or Messenger of God, and the delight you take in my Ministry hath evidenced itself (and still doth) by your constant attendance upon it. In this Sceptic Age you have been Wise to Sobriety; in this Erroneous Age you have been sound in the Faith, neither admiring the pretended new Lights, nor falling in love with those old rotten Errors which some have digged out of their Graves:



In this dividing Age you have kept the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; you are not for taking up a Yoke of Bondage, but for standing fast in that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, yet no Friends to Licentiousness. While you flee to the Gospel for Relief and Comfort, you own the Law for your Rule, you do not divide Christ, but take him just as God hath exalted him, and doth offer him, Prince as well as Savior; and not only to be an underling to pay your Debts, and bear your Burdens, and die for your Offences, but likewise to be a King upon his Throne Commanding and Ruling you. And as you rely only upon him for Righteousness, so you desire to imitate and follow him in his Holiness, and to show forth his Virtues, who hath called you out of Darkness into his marvelous Light. Am I mistaken in any of you as to these things, I hope I am not, the Lord grant I may not; I know of no wild Notions, nor loose Opinions among you, may there never be any, but all of you have (as one said) Heads well-hearted and Hearts well-headed, and so a soundness throughout. May you approve yourselves to God and Men, being good Christians, good Subjects, good Citizens, good Husbands and Wives, good Parents and Children, good Masters, Mistresses and Servants, good Friends and Neighbors, filled with the Holy Ghost and Goodness, and all the Fruits of Righteousness; Love God, Father, Son, and Spirit with a supreme, entire, and most intense love; think the most vehement flame of your love too cold here: Love the Church of God, study, seek, and pray for her good: Love all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, though in some things they differ from you, let not that cause any alienation in Affection so long as they hold the Head, count them Brethren, and be dear over them as such; love one another, help one another, quicken, strengthen, comfort one another, provoke one another to Love and good Works; rejoice in one another's Mercies, sympathize with one another's Afflictions, bear one another's Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.

Most dearly Beloved, my Mouth is open to you, and my Heart enlarged. The great God knows I do as really desire and pray for the Prosperity and Salvation of you all, and of all yours as I do mine own; and in the following Sermons I have commended no other things to you than what I believe and know to be both your Duty and Interest, and would myself be found in the practice of; if we call ourselves Christians let us be Christians, Israelites, and Israelites indeed; what signifies the Name without the thing? Gird up, I beseech you, gird up the Loins of your Minds, make no trifling Objections, listen not, yield not to any wicked Temptations, but apply to your Work; act for God in your Places to the utmost; shine bright in your own Sphere, keep your Hearts continually in a holy frame fit for Communion with God in Duty; be not now backward to it, nor hereafter weary of it.

Though you have but a little stock of Knowledge and Parts, fall to Trading and you will increase it. Be not discouraged because you cannot do what you would, God accepts of the Will; when the Disciples were offended with a good Woman, Christ's plea for her was, She hath done what she could. The Lord told his Servant, he had been faithful in his little, and thereupon gave him an entrance into his Joy. Your little will find great acceptance, and be rewarded with great Blessings, so it be your Best. In short, would you stem the Tide of Profaneness which breaks in upon us with fury? Would you save the Life of Practical Religion which is brought very low, and in a deep Consumption? Would you be instrumental for the preserving of a Seed to serve the Lord? Would you be able to give a good account of yourselves in the Day when God shall come to Reckon with you? And do you desire the present and future welfare of those precious Souls which are committed to your Care, then observe the Rules, and follow the Counsels of God which are given in this Book.

And the God of Heaven accept you in the Beloved, grant your Petitions, water the Seed you sow, and bless both you and yours, and make you Blessings to one another, and all of you Blessings to the City, and the Nation. I do heartily pray for you; I need your Prayers too, and earnestly beg them; do not deny me, do not forget me, in praying for me you pray for yourselves. The gracious Goodwill of him that dwelt in the Bush be upon you, let God compass you about with his Favor as with a Shield, and make you Rich in Blessings of the Right Hand, and of the Left: And Oh! That you and I may at last meet in Heaven, and there, together with the Saints and Angels, Sing Eternal Hallelujahs to God and the Lamb; so prays;

Your Souls Friend and Servant in our Dearest Lord; Samuel Slater.

From my Study, Mar. 23. 1694.

# FAMILY WORSHIP.

## I.

First Arguments for the setting up of Family-worship and Duty

Joshua 24. 15. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

These are the words of Joshua, once the Servant, afterward the Successor of Moses, a great Man, and good too, and this is an excellent pair, how sweet and amiable in a conjunction, like pure White and Red, they make a curious complexion, and render a person indeed Noble and Illustrious. Goodness with Greatness is like a rich and sparkling Diamond set in a Ring of Gold. This good and great Man had followed the Lord, not halting nor by halves, but fully; and it pleased God, who takes special notice of his faithful Servants, to reward him by exalting him; Moses having, as an Instrument in the Divine hand, brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt, and carried them through a wast and howling Wilderness to the very Borders of the promised Land: God called him off, having no more for him to do, commanded him to go up to Mount Nebo, and die there, in order to his happy Transportation to a better Country, the Celestial Canaan, the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, and chose Joshua for the Man that must complete that great and glorious work, and put that beloved People into the actual possession of that good Land.

This being done, and Joshua now grown old, and finding himself after so many tedious Journeys and hard Labors sit and ready to go to his Long home, to his Everlasting Rest, He gathered all the Tribes of Israel, and the Chief Men among them unto Shechem; if any ask why thither? I answer; it is by some conceived, and not without an appearance of reason, because after that Abraham had in obedience to the Divine Command, gone out of his own Country, and from his Fathers house, God did there first appear to him, and gave him the Promise of the Land of Canaan, and upon that he did there first build an Altar unto the Lord, as you may read in Gen. 12.6, 7. And also because not long after their entrance into the Promised Land Joshua himself had in Mount Ebal, which was near unto Shechem, built an Altar unto the Lord God of Israel, and wrote upon the Stones a Copy of the Law of Moses, and so renewed the Covenant between God and them, as we find, Josh. 8.30, 31, 32. But that may suffice to be spoken as to the reasons of his gathering them unto Shechem.

Having there assembled them, He began with giving them in the Name of the Lord, a very short, but pithy Narrative of those great and wonderful things which had been by God done for them all along from the mercy that had been shewn unto Abraham their Father to his giving them the Land of Canaan according as he had promised. And then in his own Name He followed that Relation with a very serious and warm Exhortation grounded thereupon; verse 14. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth, and put away the Gods which your Fathers served on the other side of the Flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord. He knew what an uncertain and fickle People they were, and so did endeavor to fix them; and if they had any ingenuity▪ any sense of kindness, to bind them to God with these Silken Cords of Love and Goodness.

In this 15th verse He bids them choose, in case they did not like what he had propounded, then think of one under whose Government and Protection they might promise themselves a secure and comfortable Being. If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the God's which your Fathers served that were on the other side of the Flood, or the God's of the Amorites, in whose Land ye dwell; which you must not look upon as a permission or allowance, or leaving them to themselves, as in a matter indifferent, whether they would worship the true God, or turn Idolaters: For in the preceding Chapter he had earnestly persuaded and charged them, verse. 6, to be very courageous to keep and do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, not turning aside therefrom, neither to the right hand nor to the left: And verse. 7. That they come not among the Nations, that remain among them, neither make mention of the Name of their God's, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow themselves to them. But verse. 8, cleave unto the Lord Jehovah their God: And v. 11, to take good heed unto themselves, that they lived the Lord their God. And again in this Chapter, v. 14. Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth. But in this way he endeavors sweetly to insinuate, and to get within them, and by an holy Art prevail with them to oblige and bind themselves to God: very well knowing that People care not for doing what they are forced to do; but without a blush depart from that which they were brought to by mere constraint; whereas they are pleased with their own choice, and are most likely to stand firm to that unto which they have in Judgment, and upon due deliberation engaged themselves. In order therefore to a wise Election, which they may never have cause with sorrow and shame to reflect upon, he doth on the one hand set before them the greatness, excellency and glory of God, together with those many and singular advantages that will accrue to them who are his faithful Servants; and on the other hand he sets before them the vanity and baseness of Idols, the folly of

those that own and serve them, and the mischiefs which do pursue them, and will for certain overtake them; and hereupon after a due weighing and comparing of things he would have them make their choice of one or the other, being guided therein by right reason, and their true Interest. He knew, that God would have his People serve him out of choice; as he chooseth them, so he would be chosen by them. And for a motive and inducement, he acquaints them with his own fixed and unalterable resolution, whom they had by long experience found to be a gracious and holy Man, a prudent and loving Governor, a valiant and successful Warrior. And we may conceive him speaking thus to them; O ye seed of Abraham! If ye be given to change, so am not I: If after all that God hath been to you, and done for you, you will be so ingrateful as to forget and forsake him, so will not I. He hath all along been so gracious a God to us all, that he shall be my God forever and ever: I am so well, so happy with him, that I cannot mend myself: I can be nowhere better, nowhere so well, therefore I will abide with him; as in the Text,

I and my house will serve the Lord.

This was his holy resolve, and to this he would stand, there could be no reason to the contrary; and as for the example of Apostates, it should with him be of no significancy, nor would he be carried down by the stream. He was, and would be for God, be they for whom they would. In the words there are these things observable.

First, The thing he resolved upon, which he had in his heart and purpose; that was, to serve, while others of towering and ambitious spirits are altogether for commanding and Lording it, this good Man was for serving. Though he was a Prince, a great General, yet did he not look upon it as a disparagement and below him to be a Servant. No more did holy David afterward, the King of Israel, even when he

had been called from following the Sheep, and placed upon the Throne, he knew how still to serve, and loved to do it; the King of Israel thought it no dishonor to serve the God of Israel, and therefore he with joy took upon him the name, Servant ▪ reckoning it his highest and most honorable Title, Psal. 116.16. O Lord, truly, I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant. This service is made up of Acts of Worship performed to the Divine Majesty, and a Life of Obedience to the Divine Will. In it there is Liberty, yea most perfect Freedom; those that are strangers to it are the worst of Slaves; in it is the highest honor. To be one of God's Servants, is more noble than to be one of the World's Monarchs: And in it is the greatest comfort, Isa. 65.13, 14. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my Servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my Servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my Servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold, my Servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

Secondly; Here is the Person to whom the Service is to be performed; not to Idols, not to Devils, not to Sin, the wages of which is death; not to divers Lusts, which are tyrannical and cruel, but Jehovah, that is the word in the Original, the Lord, the Lord of Lord's, the Lord of Life and Glory, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Lord God of Israel, whose Commandments are not grievous, but his Yoke is easy, and his Burden is light, his Yoke being lined with his Love, and his Burden having Wings.

Thirdly; Here are the Persons, by whom this Service is to be performed unto this God; We, i.e. I and my house; I myself, not only call others to the work, but also set my own hand to it, lead them the way: I will serve the Lord, and all that are mine shall do it together with me. Rather than not serve God at all, he would serve him alone. Joshua would leave Israel if they would leave God. But he would not



serve God alone so long as he could have company, so long as there were any that he could influence, any that he could rule and command; they that will live in my house shall serve my God; they that would enjoy the comfort of my house, shall join in the work and duty of my house; We will serve the Lord. Exemplum proponitur Gubernandae Familiae, saith Masius. Here is set before us an excellent Pattern, or good Example for the ordering and governing of a Family. Oh that it may be followed by all those who call themselves Christians, and own Jehovah for the Lord their God! That a Christian Profession and Practical Atheism may not meet in them. The Doctrine which I raise from these words, and offer to your most serious consideration as the Truth of God, to be believed by you, received in Love, and obeyed from the Heart, is this.

Doct. It is the great duty of all those whom God hath made Heads or Governors of Families, to set up Religious Duties and the Worship of God in their respective Families.

Oh that God would so assist and succeed me in the handling hereof, and accompany what shall delivered with such power upon your Consciences and Hearts, as by that time I have finished these Discourses, there may not be one Prayerless Family belonging to this numerous Congregation! How greatly then would my Soul bless God, and with what comfort and joy should I look upon you!

It is both a wicked and miserable thing for any to be without God in the World, Ephes. 2.12. He is so great, so necessary a good, that nothing can possibly supply the want of him. Notwithstanding Moon and all the Stars, it is night with us when once the Sun is departed off our Horizon. God is absolutely necessary for us, and our All is due to him. Single persons must know it to be their duty and interest to serve and worship God in their Capacities, as Publicly in the Gates of

Zion, which God loves, in the Assemblies of the Saints, unto which they ought to join themselves as followers of the same Lord, and Members of the same Body; so singly and alone, let their Chambers and Closets be Witnesses for them that they do not live in an ingrateful and wicked unmindfulness of God. Let Children begin betimes with God. Let young Men and Maids have early converses with God, waiting upon him, and walking with him: And when they come to alter their condition, and to have Yoke-fellows and Families, let them be careful to set up the Worship of God in them; though let them still remember to keep up their retirements. It is not enough for them to worship God in their Families, but they ought to do it in their Chambers too; nor is it enough for them to worship God in their Chambers, but they ought to do it in their Families too. Let not these jostle nor exclude one another, but as Sister-duties live sweetly together under the same Roofs. In private Duties the holy Soul hath the greater liberty, from Family-duties God hath the greater Honor. Secret duties are plainer Evidences of Sincerity, Family and public duties are of larger influence and usefulness. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord: We will unite in his Service, not only approve of it, or consent to it, but join in it. Take here with you these two things.

First; The Service of God should begin as soon as the Family begins. This I desire Young ones to consider of, who are entering into the World, and setting upon House-keeping; lay this down as an undeniable Maxim, that it is best beginning with God; so to do is both duty and wisdom. That Man who doth not carry God along with him, is like to miscarry by the way, and at last lie down in sorrow: He opens his door to the Devil (that will bring very bad company along with him) who at his first entrance upon House-keeping shuts God out, and turns his back upon him, or at least doth not invite him. It is

not feasting, not eating and drinking together (though' that is lawful and friendly) but Prayer that will prove the best House-warming.

Secondly; As it is good beginning with God, so it is as good holding on: To be weary of well doing argues a bad temper of Soul; to throw up duty is sin, and shows plainly that a person was never upright in it, never hearty to it, never really tasted the sweetness of it, Job 27.10. Will the Hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God? No, neither; and because not the former, therefore not the latter, because God is not his delight, Prayer will not be his constant business; he hath in his heart no suitableness to God, and therefore no pleasure in his Service; but such as have been sincere in it will be steadfast, and indeed they will never find any reason for the giving of it over. God is as full and free as ever he was, the Trade of Godliness as safe and sure, and the returns as considerable. God can with as much cause and boldness appeal now to those that shall desert him, and throw up Religious Exercises, as formerly he did to ungrateful Israel, Jer. 2.5. What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have followed after vanity, and are become vain? He well knew, though' he could charge vanity and folly upon them, and make good the charge, yet they could not justly charge iniquity upon him. And so again, verse 37. Have I been a Wilderness unto Israel, or a Land of Darkness? No, no, not a Wilderness, but a fruitful Field; not a Land of Darkness, but a Goshen, a Sun of Righteousness; and such as have been indeed his Servants, have continued firm and faithful, liking him too well, and loving him too dearly to leave him. Will ye go away? said Christ to his Disciples; Peter desired not time to consider of it, but had his Answer ready, which he immediately returns in the names of them all, John. 6.68. Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of Eternal Life. Joshua had served and followed God for a great many years: He was now grown old, and his Experiences of

God's care and goodness had more multiplied and increased to a far greater number than his days, and thereupon he saw abundant reason for resolving to continue in his Service. And so did holy Polycarp the Disciple of St. John, for being tempted to deny Christ, and return to Heathen Idolatry, he briskly replied, I have served my Master Christ now these fourscore years, and all along found him a good Master to me, therefore I will not leave him now. And if you will believe David, he assures you they are all of the same mind, Psal. 84.4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee; they are and will be so, always delighting in his Work, and always commending and glorying in their Lord. But yet for the further opening to you the duty itself, I must acquaint you with two things which are incumbent upon the Governors of Families, and which they are bound carefully to look after; viz.

1. That God be served in their Families.
2. That they and their Families do together serve him.

First; It is the duty of Family-Governors to take care that there be the Service and Worship of God in their Families; that they themselves do serve the Lord, and that their Children do serve him, yea and that also their Servants do serve him. That as the precious Ointment poured out upon the Head of Aaron ran down to the skirts of his Garments; so Religion, and at least, the outward practices of Piety, may sweetly descend from the Head of the House to the inferior and meanest Members of it. You, Masters, Mistresses, and Parents, ought to take care, not only that your Children be respective and obedient to you, nor only that your Servants be faithful to you, and industrious in their working for you; but likewise that both the one and the other do perform their duty to God as well as to you, and be far more ready to pass by a failure in them with respect to yourselves, than to bear

with a contempt and neglect of God. Do not only see to the feeding and clothing of your Children and Servants, but as they are capable of receiving it, do you feed their Minds with Knowledge, and exercise them unto Godliness; and let it not be your desire only or chiefly that they may live well and comfortably, but that they may live holily; that they may live like Christians, as well as like Men. The Apostle's charge is this, Rom. 12.17. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Now I will appeal to your Consciences, whether it be not so to fear and serve God, to pray and seek God, to worship God, to perform duty to God; this cannot but be honest, <H&G>, good, very good, amiable and becoming in the sight and account of all men, except those that are Atheists, and because of their being Atheists, do not deserve the name of Men, but have forfeited the name, since they contradict the very Light of Nature, and run counter to the dictates of Reason, and are sit to herd only among the Beasts. And if that notion be true (which some have embraced, and I do not reject) that it is not Reason so much as Religion which is the specifical Difference, and doth distinguish between a Man and a Brute, because there is something of Reason to be found in Brutes, at least, call it by what name you please, some shadow of Reason, some Resemblance, something that may claim a little Kindred, whereas there is not to be found in them anything that looks like Religion, no appearance nor footsteps of it; then we may very well say, without being guilty of injustice, or doing a real injury, That Atheists do deserve, with Nebuchadnezzar, to be driven from among Men, until they have with him learnt to own, praise, extol and honor the King of Heaven, all whose works are Truth, and his ways Judgment, and those that walk in Pride he is able to abase; but at the present they are degenerate, and no better than Beasts in the shapes of Men. For they deny a Being to him by whom all things are, to him who is the Fountain of all Being, and the Author of their own; they do not only cast off a Religious Life, and live without all acts of Divine Worship, but also

they do, as much as in them is, take away the Object of it, in whom they live, and move, and have their Being, and by this one thing open a wide and effectual door to Villainies of all sorts.

But from the Scripture last named, it is evident to all those that do believe the Scripture, that it is your duty to provide things honest; such things as are good and lovely. See that all in your Families be honest, that they be honest to you and to one another, and to the Great God; that they give unto everyone their due, unto God his due; that they do not rob God, nor withhold from him that which is meet, and that is, Worship. Honor is not so due to Parents, nor Service to Masters as Worship is to God, Jer. 10.5. Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations, for to thee it doth appertain. The fear of God is there put not only for the Holy Affection of fear, which we should keep up all the day, and carry with us into every place; but likewise for all Divine Worship, which upon all accounts he may challenge at our hands: It appertains to him, he hath an undoubted right to it. For God to crown Man at first with Glory and Honor, and make him have Dominion over the works of his hands; was an Act of Goodness: For God to spare fallen sinful Man, to keep him out of Hell, and afford him any comforts of Life; is an Act of Mercy, Lam. 3. It is of the Lord's Mercies we are not consumed. But for Man to Own and Honor God, to Fear, Seek, Serve and Worship God; is an Act of Justice. And let men provide what they will for their Families, for their Wives, Children and Servants; let them see to it that they have all things richly to enjoy: Yet if in this one particular they be negligent and careless, if they do not see to it, that those who Live with them do Serve and Worship God; they do not provide that which is Honest.

Observe the Resolution of Holy David and imitate his Example, Psal. 101.6. Mine Eyes shall be upon the Faithful of the Land. i.e. Good Men, that will be every way faithful to me, and to my God as well as

to me. Men that do not only profess him, but will be true to that Profession. Men that call him Master, and will serve him as such, that they may dwell with me; he would delight in their company, and count them the Ornaments of his House. He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. The perfect way is the way of God's Commandments, the Scripture way, the way of Holiness and Duty, the way Everlasting. He that walketh in such a way is a Man for me, such a one I like, and such an one I will choose; such an one shall serve me as will serve my God as well as me. And he had said before, verse 4, that He would not know a wicked person. You must not understand it of a common ordinary knowledge, a nuda scientia, bare naked knowledge, for in that sense he did, and could not but know many, too too many; but he would not know a wicked person so as to countenance him, not so know him as to make him his choice, and have fellowship with him. He that doth not fear God, that will not mind, serve and worship God, that is without God in the World, may well be branded for a wicked Man; in all companies let him go for such an one: And, saith David, I will have nothing to do with that sort of men; such a person shall be none of my Familiars, none of my intimate Acquaintance; he shall be none of my Family, none of my Court. And it would be well for the World, if all Princes would say the same, and be as good as their word; if they would not know wicked persons, fewer wicked persons would be known: Were there no wicked men in Favor at Courts, there would be fewer in the Cities, and fewer in the Countries. But when they swarm at a Court, they fly about, and like Locusts overspread and cover the face of a Land.

Secondly; It is the duty of those who are Governors of Families, to take care, and so to order things, that they and their Families together do serve and worship God; I say, that they do it together, that it be their joint act, and that all concur to the making up of an

holy Harmony. It is not enough that there is some Worshipping of God in the Family, but besides, over and above that there ought to be an holy Family-Worship. David saith, Psal. 133.1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to walk together in Unity. It is a very commendable and lovely thing to see the same among Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Mistresses and Maids; it is sweet dwelling together in Unity; but it is far more pleasant and delightful to God and all good Men, to see them dwelling and walking together in Piety. As to live together, and love together, and eat and drink together without any quarrels or contentions; so to read the Sacred Scriptures, and other good Books together, and pray together, and sing Psalms together, and put forth other Acts of Religion. In short, how good and how pleasant is it to see them living together, not only a natural and civil Life, in Love and mutual Kindness, but likewise a gracious and holy Life in all goodness. So much may suffice for the opening to you, what I mean by setting up the Worship of God in Family.

Now a person would think, that such as live in London, where there is so much Light, and plenty of Gospel-means; specially such as own a God, and call themselves Christians, should not need many Arguments either to convince them that this is a Duty, or to persuade them to the performance of it; but they would of themselves at the very mentioning of the thing assent to the goodness and reasonableness of it; that all those who do profess their believing that there is a God, and their own standing in Relation to him, and having an Interest in him as their God, should at their hearing of Family-Worship cheerfully acknowledge it to be his due. But, alas! Alas! Whatever the Light doth plainly discover, and whatever their well-informed and awakened Consciences do suggest to them, how many are there among us that imprison the Truth, and hold it in unrighteousness! And by consequence how great is the number of



them who live in the great, if not total neglect of this excellent work? And I do not now speak of Atheists, nor of those who are scandalously wicked and profane; for it is not to be wondered at in them, since they have no fear of God before their Eyes. But I and others of my Brethren are greatly mis-informed, if the guilt hereof doth not cleave to some, yea to many of those who profess Religion, and have joined themselves in Communion with those who do really desire and aim at the greatest strictness and most exact holiness; so that there is apparent necessity of doing what we can towards the reviving of this excellent practice, which hath been by so many so unkindly, so sinfully shut out of doors. And to this end I shall do these two things.

First; I shall prove that the setting up of the Worship of God and Religious Exercises in Families is a Duty.

Secondly; Lay down some Arguments by which this may appear your reasonable Service. We begin with the former, That Family-worship is a Duty; and that I prove by these three things: The Practice of the Heathen; The Precepts of the Scripture; And the Practice of Saints.

I. This was the Practice amongst the Heathens; though they had no more than the dim Light of Nature, yet by that they did see this to be their Duty; These not having the Law written, were a Law to themselves; and have done by Nature many of the things contained in the Law, Rom. 2.14. And among others this. We find they had their Lares their Penates, such as they counted and called their Household-God's, and unto them they did offer up Sacrifices in their Families, and unto them they did together perform acts of Religious Worship. And therefore Prayer to God in Families, is a part of Natural Worship, because discovered by Natural Light; and for the shameful neglect thereof the poor blind Heathen will rise up against

multitudes of the Men and Women of this untoward Generation. Shall they be more liberal to their God's of Dung, than we are to the Lord of Glory? Shall they do more for the Honoring of their false God's, than some of us do for the living and true God who made Heaven and Earth, and who is the Author of your Being, the God of your Comforts, and the Father of all your Mercies; by the Hand of whose Power ye were made, and upon whose Cost ye spend. How sore and dreadful punishment will you deserve if the very Heathen shall condemn you! If they were more observant of their Idols than you are of God; it will be unspeakably more tolerable for them in the Day of Judgment than for you. Think upon and apply to yourselves what the Apostle Paul said to the wicked Jew, Rom. 2.27. Shall not Uncircumcision which is by Nature if it fulfil the Law, Judge thee who by the Letter and Circumcision dost transgress the Law? The clearer that Light is which men do enjoy, if they rebel against it, the greater is the Sin which they commit, the greater is the guilt which they contract, and therefore the fiercer that wrath which they deserve.

II. Family-Worshiping of God is the matter of the Precept. It is a burden, if any will be so vile as to think or call it so, which the great God, whose we are, hath bound upon us. Let me particularly instance in Family-Prayer, which sweet and precious Incense I would gladly have all your houses perfumed daily with. It must be granted, that it is not expressly commanded in Scripture, not totidem verbis, in so many words, but it is included in express commands, and from those commands, by necessary consequence it will appear to any one that doth not shut his own Eyes, to be the Mind and Will of God concerning us. For observe:

First; We are expressly commanded to make use of all Prayer. Take notice of that word, All, all Prayer, i.e. all kinds of holy Prayer, Ephes.

6.18. The Apostle had before told them, they must wrestle with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedness's in high places; and having thereupon counseled them to make sure of a sufficient strength, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and Armor of Proof, the whole Armor of God, he doth here in this Verse advise them to a wrestling with God; and indeed it is excellent advice; for he that can like a Prince wrestle with God in a way of Supplication, will come off a Conqueror, when he is called out to wrestle with Devils in a way of Opposition. Observe the words, Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all Saints. Mark that, with all prayer. Now there are many sorts of Prayer, namely, Exclamatory Prayer, in which the holy Soul shoots out a Dart to Heaven, and on a sudden lifts a Request up to God; which may be done at any time, and in any place, in Company, at Dinner, in the Street as you are walking, in the Shop as you are working or trading; and in this way you may sweeten and sanctify your worldly Affairs by mingling spiritual and gracious thoughts with them. Thus, while good old Jacob had his Sons before him, and was telling them what should befall them in the last days; in the midst of it his Soul got on the wing and mounted up to Heaven in that short, but sweet expression, Gen. 49.18. I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord! And there is stated, fixed prayer, when a person doth at appointed times, and in a solemn manner set itself to pour forth its Requests before God, and make its desires known to him. There is Public Prayer, in the Congregations and Assemblies of the Saints, when not only two or three, but scores, hundreds, thousands are met together in the Name of Christ, and the Minister as the Mouth speaks to God, and the hearts of the People go along with him by a real consent, and to his Confessions, Petitions and Thanksgivings add their Amen. And there is Secret Prayer, performed in the greatest retirement, when a person hath withdrawn himself from all

company, and nobody seeth nor hears, but God alone, and so it can be more free and open, not hiding its groans from him, but spreading all its desires before him, and acquainting him with that which it would not have any one in the World besides to know. And then there is Family-Prayer, wherein the Governor gets the Children, and Servants, and all the Members thereof together, and goeth with them to the Throne of Grace in order to the paying of their Homage unto God, and the obtaining from God a blessing upon himself, and upon them. Now this kind of Prayer is in that Scripture required as well as any other. God doth here by the Apostle require our praying with all prayer, and if with all prayer, then with Family-prayer.

Secondly; We are commanded to pray everywhere, 1 Tim. 5.8. I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting, <H&G>, in every place; not only in the Temple, and in the Synagogue, but everywhere, in any place where it is convenient, and you may be safe. As God is no respecter of Persons, so not of Places, as Beggars go up down scattering their Vermin in all places, and at every door; so you should everywhere be scattering your Treasure in gracious discourses, and pouring out your Souls to God in prayer. Now, faith famous Mr. Perkins upon this very place; if it be the duty of men to pray everywhere, then certainly in their Families, where God hath set them in so near a Relation one to another.

Thirdly; We are commanded to pray continually, or to pray always; as in that fore-mentioned, Ephes. 6. Praying always, with all prayer. Which words of the Apostle we are not to understand, as if praying must engross and take up all our time, and we had nothing else to do, but live Drones, like a company of lazy Beggars that will not work though they are able. Prayer indeed is a very considerable part of a Christians duty, yet it is but a part. There are various duties which he hath to perform, and much other work of the Lord, in which he ought

to abound. There is reading of the Scriptures, singing of Psalms, hearing the Word, serious meditation and self-examination as well as prayer. There is instructing of Youth, and Catechizing of Children, and exhorting one another, and provoking one another to Love and to good works, as well as praying. Yea and there is tending of the Shop, and working in the Trade, and looking to the Children, and washing of the house, and providing for the Family, and several other things, and must be done. We must have respect to all God's Commandments, and labor to fill up our places, and to stand complete in all the will of God concerning us. Therefore when the Apostle speaks of our praying always; understand it thus, pray in everything; for so we are required to do in another Scripture; Phil. 4.6. Be careful for nothing, i.e. with a distrustful care, with a solicitous and anxious care, with a distracting disquieting care; But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your requests known unto God. Pray in great things, as believing the greatness of God's Power; and pray in little things, as believing also the extensiveness of his Care. Pray over thy Calling, because it is not the diligent hand alone, but the Divine Blessing with it that makes rich. Pray over your Meat and Drink, and go not to your Tables as Swine to their Trough, knowing that Creatures cannot befriend or serve you any further than as they are commissioned and assisted by God. When Ministers go to study, let them pray, because it is the Spirit of Truth that must lead them into all Truth. They will make sad work of it if God be not with their heads in studying their Sermons, and with their mouths in delivering them. And when People come to hear, let them pray, under and after all our Labors; they will learn nothing to purpose, they will not be wise to Salvation, unless they are taught of God. Thus to pray always, is to pray in everything.

Again; To pray always, is to pray in every condition. When you are High, as knowing you are neither out of the reach of Trouble, nor too

good to serve and wait upon God: And when you are Low, as knowing you are not out of the reach of the Everlasting Arms, but still there is hope in Israel concerning you. Pray in Sickness and in Health too, for it is God that must remove the former, preserve and continue the latter. Pray in Adversity, for it is God that must support and comfort under that, and Prosperity, for it is God that must sanctify that, and give you a heart and wisdom to improve it. Pray in Trouble, that God would not be a Terror to you, in Danger, that he would be a Defense to you, and the Rock of your Refuge, and in Peace, that your Halcion days may neither be overcast nor abused. By Prayer in Adversity show your trusting in God, and believing no case to be desperate which he will please to undertake; and by Prayer in Prosperity, show to others your dependence upon God, and your expectations being wholly from him; and that you live more upon a Father in Heaven, than you do upon any, or all the Creatures here below.

Once again; Pray always, that is, pray daily, pray every day. This is to be not only a Sabbath-day's work, as I am informed, some penurious strait-laced Professors make it, no, no, it ought to be your everyday-work. Sure I am, there is a great deal of reason for it. We do commit sin, and contract much guilt every day, therefore it becomes us to repent and confess, and it concerns us to sue out our pardon every day. We have our Dangers, visible and invisible Dangers every day, therefore should be daily hiding ourselves under our Fathers gracious wing, and craving the Divine Protection. We have Mercies every day, a continued succession of them, an innumerable number of them; they follow us, they load us, they compass us about, therefore we should have our Sacrifices of Praise, and as persons of ingenuity, pay our thankful acknowledgments to God every day. Further, we have our Wants every day, we want our daily Bread, and our daily Pardon; we want daily Supplies. Our Cistern would soon be

empty if God should cut off the stream of his goodness, we want daily Supports, and should quickly drop into the Grave, yea into nothing, if God should withdraw his hand, and let go his hold of us. And we want a daily blessing, without which all our contrivances are vain, and all our endeavors fruitless. If God do not say, go and prosper, we had as good sit still, and therefore there is very great reason why we should have our daily prayers. We are commanded by our Savior to pray and not to faint; for this end he spake a Parable, Luk. 18.1, and by the Apostle, to continue instant in prayer, Rom. 12.12, that is, to pray daily, which was signified and taught by the daily Sacrifice under the Law; concerning which you may read in Exod. 29. It is said in the 42 verse, This shall be a continual Burnt-Offering thorough-out your Generations, at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation before the Lord, where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. This shall be a continual Burnt-Offering, this, what? If you look back to the 38th and 39th verses, you will see; This is that which thou shalt offer upon the Altar, two Lambs of the first year day by day continually, the one Lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other Lamb shalt thou offer at Even. Where you may take notice of this that the offering up of these two Lambs every day is called a continual Burnt-Offering. And Mr. Answorth upon the place tells us, that daily Sacrifice signified the continual sanctification of the Church through Faith in Christ the Lamb of God, by whose mediation we and our actions are accepted of God; and likewise he there tells us, the Hebrew Doctors say, the continual Sacrifice of the Morning did make atonement for the sins that were done in the night, and the Evening Sacrifices made atonement for iniquities committed in the day. Now by a parity of Reason we may affirm, that praying every day Morning and Evening, is praying always, or, continuing instant in prayer.

And truly this is the least you can do if you would be grateful, if you would bring glory to God, if you would be exemplary in your places; and to do this is good. So the holy Prophet assures us in Psal. 92, which he entitled, A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day, verse. 1. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy Name, O most High. This is good, there is all good in it, honest, and profitable, and pleasant good; it is a paying of God what we owe to him, and it will bring over advantage to us, and it carries a great deal of sweetness along with it. But when is it good to do this? Upon a Sabbath-day, the Lord's-day, yes, it is good then, it is very good then, it is then specially in season, because that day is given us not so much for the outward rest of the Body, as for the inward and spiritual refreshing of the Soul, that being taken off and set at liberty from the Labors and Toils of the World, we may be wholly taken up with, and employed about the Service and Worship of God; but though this be good, singularly good upon our Sabbath-days, yet it is not good only then, for it is always good at other times as well as then; so the same Psalmist assures us in the next Verse; To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. Mark that word, every, every night, and by consequence every morning, day by day; in the morning, because then the mind is more fresh, and free, and lively, not yet entangled with, nor depressed and fettered with secular Affairs, but more fit to wait upon God, and engage to holy works, which call for, and deserve the best and happiest frame. And in the night, the pleasant peace, stillness and silence whereof doth render it very accommodate to, and proper for the most sacred, serious and solemn exercises. In the morning prayer should open the door to business; give your first visit to God, who is your best Friend, and at Evening let Prayer lock up the door and draw the Curtain. Before the Body lies down in its Bed, let the Soul return unto its Rest. This is a most excellent way for you to enjoy yourselves and your God too; a most excellent way to bring down



from Heaven a Blessing upon your Labors in the day, and to put a sweetness and refreshing into your sleep at night. In this way you commit yourselves and your all to God, and engage God for you.

III. Family-worshipping of God hath been the practice of Holy men in all Ages. Saints standing upon Record in the Scriptures have sought and served God in their Families, and with them; and so have all others in succeeding Generations, who have been sound both in Head and Heart, and acted by right Principles. They have loved the work, and delighted in the performance of it, out of Conscience and Choice. As for those Persons, whose Heads have been Fly-blown, and their minds corrupted with Error, they are to be the Objects of our Compassion and Pity; and the good Lord cause his Light to shine into their Minds in order to their better information, and the reducing them from the Error of their way; but their practices are by no means to be made use of as your Directory, or followed as your Pattern. For if any have imbibed false notions, it is no wonder that their lives and actions are crooked and irregular, shamefully deficient in some things, and no less extravagant in others. Let us look to the precious and eminent Saints of God, those that lived and died in the Faith, and obtained a good report. You are commanded to be followers of them who through Faith and Patience have inherited the Promises, who are now possessed of those great things which they before lived in the belief and joyful expectation of, who were here graciously accepted of God, and are now received and glorified by him. Let you and me, my dearly Beloved, follow them, and tread in their steps. Keep the same way now, for it is the way Everlasting, and turn not aside from that, neither to the right hand nor to the left, and equal their pace; make as much haste as the best of them did, considering that your time is as uncertain as theirs, and it may be shorter; only walk with circumspection, not blindfold, avoiding those things which were blame-worthy in them, for even they were but Men, and that,

imperfect Men, compassed about with infirmities, having in them flesh as well as spirit. Imitate them therefore in that which was good in them, and will be so in you, and in nothing else. I may very well apply that of Paul to the present case, and let you and me mind it as our Rule, Phil. 4.8. Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, and were so in them, in all, or in any of them, think of those things, and go you and do the like: so long as they wrote fair imitate them, but beware of their blots. I am, and oh that all professing Religion would be for the reviving of the old godliness. Primitive Government in Churches, and Primitive Godliness in Christians are like old Gold, the best; Jer. 6.16. Thus saith the Lord, stand there in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your Souls. The old way is the good way, meddle not with new upstart Doctrines and Practices, that is best which is eldest. Now then come we to the Business before us, upon enquiry we shall find that the setting up of Prayer and other Religious Exercises in the Family was the good old way, that way in which those precious Saints walked here upon Earth, who at last got safely to Heaven, and whose Prayers are changed for Eternal Hallelujahs. I will not multiply Instances, but bring three or four out of the Old and New Testaments, and in the Mouth of so many Witnesses I hope you will look upon the thing as evident and established.

First; I Appeal to you, Was not this the way in which this great and excellent Person Joshua walked? He was a Person that God put great Honor upon, he was the Man that must give Israel Possession of the Land of Promise, and this was his way. He had walked in it, and he was not ashamed to own it before all Israel, both the good and the bad, yea, to declare openly unto them his fixed and immovable resolution of persevering therein. This is plain in the Text, As for me

and my house we will serve the Lord; not I alone, but I and they too, I with them, whoever was or would be of his House should serve his God, and join with him in Family Duties.

Secondly; Let us look some hundred of years before Joshua, and consider the practice of Abraham, who was called the Friend of God, and the Father of the Faithful. A most remarkable Person, whose Children we shall all of us be willing and glad to be found at the last and great Day, in order to which we are concerned to have and be expressive of his Spirit, and tread in his steps: Now I desire that all of us who are Governors of Families would seriously consider what God saith of him, Gen. 18.19. The Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. I shall have occasion to make use of this Scripture more than once for several purposes. That which I do at present observe from it is, That there was Government kept up in Abraham 's Family, and that the gracious Principles, by which he was acted, led him thereunto, and that thing was very acceptable and pleasing to God; God knew that he would do so, and he knew it with a knowledge of approbation. Abraham knew his place, that God had made him Lord and King in his own House, and he would use and exercise that power and authority, with which as such he was invested. He would command his Children and his Household; not only wish and desire it, nor only persuade and exhort to it, but command it. Now I think we may from hence without the least suspicion of violence or unfair dealing draw this as a good and necessary Consequence; That since Abraham did command in his House as a King, he also would teach and instruct them as a Prophet, though there be many in the World who love Domination, that do not care to take the trouble and pains of Instruction; but doubtless Abraham being so good a Man was none of them: He took care that those who were under his Roof

should know the way of the Lord. He would teach them that good way, for it is certain, had there not been due means used for the making of them to know it, it had been a vain and foolish absurd thing in him to command them to keep it. Afterward we find that Moses did first teach, and then charge, Deut. 4.5, 6. Behold, I have taught you Statutes and Judgments even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should so do in the Land whither ye go to possess it, keep therefore and do them.

And I would ask whether we can rationally think that Abraham would command his Children and Household to keep the way, and while he was so doing not keep it himself. Our Lord Jesus doth indeed charge the Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses Seat, with binding heavy burdens, and grievous to be born; and laying them on men's shoulders, when they themselves would not move them with one of their fingers: But Abraham without doubt would not only move his Finger and Hand toward this burden of Duty, but also with all his Heart put his Shoulder under it, not counting it grievous, but pleasant and delightful; and as he instructed them by his teaching, and obliged them by his command, so he would sweetly allure and draw them by his example; for otherwise we may well think, and he might well fear that his Counsels and Commands, though loving and reasonable would be lost, and not have their desired effect; for they might in such a case judge they had enough to excuse and warrant their not following his Counsel, and not obeying his Command, because though their Father and Master did order them to do so▪ yet he would not do it himself. There are indeed Parents will teach their Children sobriety, but are drunk themselves; command them chastity, but are filthy and unclean themselves, these pull down with one hand what they seem to build with the other. Abraham, I doubt not, would practice what he taught, and tread the way he would have them to go in.

Thirdly; Did not Queen Esther do the same. The Case of the Jews was very sad, Haman being advanced by Ahasuerus, and set above all the Princes, Mordecai knowing him an Amalekite, would not bow unto him, nor do him any reverence; this Affront put the Man into a rage, and upon the study of Revenge, Mordecai single and alone was too inconsiderable and mean a prey for him to stoop to, therefore he laid a cursed Plot for the destroying all the Jews that were throughout the whole Kingdom, and it was very like to take; an Order was obtained for the destroying, killing and causing to perish all Jews both young and old, little Children and Women in one day, this set them all upon fasting, and weeping, and wailing, and many lay in Sackcloth and Ashes. Mordecai sent to Esther word of this, charging her to go in unto the King, to make Supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people, threatening her that in case she did altogether hold her peace, enlargement and deliverance should arise unto the Jews from another place, but she and her Fathers House should be destroyed. God would take care of his people, but her timorousness and neglect would issue in her own ruin: Observe now the Answer which hereupon she returned to him, Esther 4.16. Go gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, day nor night, I also and my Maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in to the King, which is not according to the Law, and if I perish I perish. Grotius saith, These were two Maidens that waited upon the Queen, one of them gave her Hand for a support when she went abroad, and the other held up her Train, and there is no question to be made, but they were either natural Jews or Proselytes, i.e. such as had been brought off from Gentilism and Converted to the Jewish Religion, and she and they fasted together. I and my Maidens will fast, not I alone, but I and they; and I am very confident, you all will readily grant it was a Religious Fast which they then kept; they did not only chasten their Bodies (as David phrased it) by abstaining so

long from all kinds of Meat and Drink, but they did worship God together, and sought him together, and joined their Hearts and Powers in a mighty wrestling with him for their own Lives, and the Lives of their People which were in such eminent and imminent danger, and which would certainly be cut off, unless God did by some wonderful Providence interpose for the preventing it. But once more.

Fourthly; We have the precious Example of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we are bound to imitate, as he was in the world so should we be in the world, 1 John 4.17, and we should run the Race that is set before us looking to Jesus, Heb. 12.1, 2, not only for encouragement, but likewise for direction. Now he had a Family, his Twelve Disciples were his Family, and he prayed and gave thanks at his Meats, and also at other times, and he prayed not only for them, but with them, Luke 9.16. As he was alone praying his Disciples were with him. Here is a seeming contradiction, that Christ should be said to be alone, and yet his Disciples with him, but there is no real one for that word, alone must be understood, as intimating no more than the multitudes being departed from him; when the Miracle of Feeding Five Thousand Men with Five Loaves and Two Fishes had been wrought, they having what they came for, the filling of their Bellies, and satisfying their Curiosity, withdrew themselves and went away, and they being gone he went to Prayer, which was a work he greatly delighted in, and in and at that Prayer his Disciples were with him.

I hope it may without vanity be said, That in what I have spoken to you upon this Subject there is enough said for the satisfaction of any sober, serious and conscientious Christian, that the setting and keeping up of the Family-worship of God is the Duty of those that are the Masters or Governors of Families. Willful Cavillers against plain Truths are not worthy nor fit to be dealt with; time and pains bestowed upon them is merely thrown away: Therefore as for those

wicked Persons, who are either of Atheistical Principles, not believing, but denying the Being of a God, or of desperately Profane Spirits, that value neither his Love nor his Wrath, and so have no fear of him before their Eyes; I do not now in these Discourses go about to persuade them, another course must be first taken with them, them I leave to the great and mighty God, begging that he would have Mercy upon them in convincing them that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and that there is a day coming when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thes. 1.7, 8, 9. So we have done with the first thing propounded, viz. That Family-worship is a Duty; the second part of the work before us is to prove that there is very great and cogent reasons for our performance of this Duty, and that it is (using the Apostle Paul 's expression) no other than <H&G>, your reasonable service. That which is to be done by rational Creatures, and is most consonant and agreeable to the Principles and Dictates of right Reason; and I doubt not but this will appear evidently to you, if you will duly consider and weigh the Arguments which we shall draw from these Four Topics.

1. From God.
2. From Governors of Families.
3. From the Families themselves.
4. From the Public.

You will find that there do Obligations rise from all these, many and strong ones for the engaging and binding you hereunto; the good

Lord grant we may study the Obligations, and answer them by a suitable practice.

First; You are to set up Religious Worship in your Families upon the account of the most great and glorious God, who alone is the proper Object of it, unto whom it is to be performed. And here are three things which did immediately occur to my thoughts, and which I do now offer to your Consideration.

I. God is the Author and Original of our Families: They had their Being from God, and therefore they should pay Homage, and perform Service unto him; this is that which doth without all Controversy lay an Everlasting Engagement upon particular Persons, high and low, young and old to serve God, to love him with all their Hearts, to fear him all the day, and to worship him, because he made them. Children are to honor their Father, and Mother, but God much more; because God was the principal efficient of their Being, their Earthly Parents no more than Instruments in his Hand. And if it be a good way of arguing in David, and so in us, to say as he did, Psal. 119.94. I am thine, save me; and verse 73. Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me, give me understanding. It cannot but be as strong, and if we be ingenuous, as forcible and taking an Argument on God's side, for him to say to us, You are mine, you were wonderfully made, formed and fashioned by my wisdom, and the hand of my power, therefore do you serve me. It is full out as good an Argument for Duty, as it can be a plea for Mercy; do not the Rivers send back their Waters to the Sea from which they received them? And shall not Man return praise and service to God from whom he received life and strength, all that he is, and hath? I desire you to take notice what a loud and earnest call there is, and how much importunity the Prophet useth in Psal. 100. 1, 2. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye Lands. Be joyful, be cheerful, it is lawful for you to be so, it is



allowed you to be so, and if you be gracious, of all persons in the World, you have the greatest right to Joy, only see that your Joy be directed to God, and terminated in God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Well, he goeth on, verse. 2. Serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing. Do not go to his work as Bears to a Stake, nor merely as to a Task, but as to your Recreation, as to your Meat and Drink, so Christ did; be sure that your duty be your delight. And yet again he adds, Enter into his Gates with thanksgiving, and into his Courts with praise; be thankful unto him and bless his Name. We should labor to have our hearts greatly raised and enlarged in our serving of God; that we have such a God, so glorious, so good, and that he is pleased to admit us into his Service, and employ us about it. But why all this? What reason is there for it? Doth any one here ask that Question? Let him know, yea and let all men know. So saith the Prophet, in verse 3. Know ye that the Lord He is God. He alone is God. Let others be what they will, never so great, and high, and good, there is not a God among them. Jehovah is God; of whom, and thro whom, and for whom are all things. It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves. The Hebrew reads it in the Margin, His we are. And Mr. Ainsworth tells us the Chaldee keeps that reading. It is He that hath made us, and his we are. He hath the best Title to us, the Supreme Sovereign Right; We are his People, and the Sheep of his Pasture. And since we are his Creatures, we should be his Servants; we should delight to do his work, because He gave us Being.

Now if there be so much reason in God's making them, why every individual, every particular single Person should serve and worship God, why they should thus come before him with praises and thanksgivings, there is as great reason why Families should do so too, nay there is the very same reason. For God made Families too, Families have their Being from God. Nay, there is a double reason,

for he hath put forth a double act of Mercy and Power: He did both make the Persons and the Family, Psal. 68.4.5. Sing unto God, sing praises to his Name, extol him that rideth upon the Heavens, by his Name JAH, and rejoice before him. One well observes, that our thoughts of God should not be low and mean, but high and heavenly, lifting up his Name above the most excellent and glorious Creatures, because they all are his Servants, and he makes use of them as he pleaseth, riding upon the Heavens as his Chariot, and because he only hath Being of himself, and gives Being to all those things that are. But what other reason is to be given for this, read on, A Father of the Fatherless, and a Judge of the Widow is God in his holy Habitation. So then, he is a God of Bowels, his Compassions work and fail not; he is a good Friend to the Poor and Helpless, Orphans and Widows, whose Tears, and the Cries of whose Necessities sometimes, and among some persons, can hardly obtain the consideration of their case; but God will be a careful Father of the Fatherless, and a righteous Judge for the Widow. But what is this to the present purpose? Though it be not, yet I was willing to take notice of it as that which may be comfortable to some; and now look into the next Verse, and we shall meet with something apposite to our case. Sing unto God, and extol him that rideth upon the Heavens, by his Name JAH. But why so? God setteth the solitary in Families. He sets them in an House, those that were destitute; so some render it, poor, wretched, destitute, were not worth a foot of Land, had not where to lay their head; he provides a place for them, and an Habitation; others read it, those that were solitary, and so do our Translators, such as are all Solitary, single Persons, and all alone, and upon that account lead a melancholic and uncomfortable life; God sets them in Families; they were once poor Servants in other men's Families, where they were fain to labor and toil, and some of them were beaten unmercifully, and pinched in their Diet, but since God hath been graciously pleased to raise them, and to give them

Families of their own; they have now Yoke-fellows to delight in, and Children to rejoice in, and Servants to work for them, and wait upon them. Nay, it is God that doth not only set in Families, but doth for many multiply and magnify them; they have numerous Families, and plenty for them. Those that had but a small matter to begin with, are now arrived at a very considerable Estate, and have not only wherewith to answer their necessities, and to silence the lamentable, bitter, heart-piercing Cries of hungry craving Children, but enough and to spare, and therefore these should worship at his footstool, and both speak and live his praise; Psal. 107. The Prophet doth in a pang and rapture, as it were, for several times one after another, break out in this holy wish; Oh that men would praise the Lord! Oh that men would praise the Lord! Oh that men would praise the Lord! Verse. 8.15, 21, 31. But what is the matter? What, do you inquire? And would you indeed know? There is matter enough, abundant matter; they that have hearts devoted to the praising of God, will never want matter of praise. The Prophet in those Verses wisheth that men would praise him for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the Children of men. His works are so wonderful, that they call for admiring's, and there is such a goodness in them that they deserve praises. And the Children of Men are greatly obliged to abound in these praises, because they are no less concerned and interested in these works, they being done to and for them. But this is only spoken in general, particulars are more affecting; and if anyone here hath not taken notice of many, he hath been very heedless and unworthy. But the Prophet doth multiply particulars in that Psalm, as he will find that peruseth it. I shall take only one out of the heap, as serving our occasion, verse. 41. He setteth the poor on high from, or, after affliction, and maketh him Families like a Flock. The Man was poor before, exceeding poor, possibly not worth a Groat, yea and he was in affliction too; though Poverty is itself a sore affliction, there needs no other, yet it doth not go alone; the poor Man is slighted by his

Friends, and trampled upon by his Neighbors, and it is likely, afraid to stir out of his own door, lest a Serjeant should clap an Arrest upon his back; but now after this affliction God raiseth him up, and sets him on high: He is now grown a considerable Person, a Man of Estate, a Gentleman in the Country, an Alderman in the City; it is well, if he be humble now he is high, and doth not forget himself, and that God too, who advanced him, and hath given him a Family like a Flock; and as a considerable Flock, so a rich Pasture for him and it to feed in; there you see, Families are of God's making. Hast thou, O Woman! A careful Husband that minds his business and provides well? Thou hadst him from God. Hast thou, O Man! A prudent Wife that orders well? It was God laid her out for thee. Have you both Children that are the Crown of your Conjugal Relation, it was God that bestowed them upon you, they all are his Off-spring. When Jacob was upon his Journey towards the Land of his Kindred, Esau went out to meet him, and God having conquered and influenced his Spirit, he embraced him and fell upon his Neck and kissed him; and seeing the Women and the Children, he said, Who are those with thee? Gen. 33.5. Jacob answered, The Children which God hath graciously given thy Servant. Children are God's gift, and they are a gracious gift, which carrieth in it a great deal of goodness and mercy. That is the first thing, God is the Author of Families, and since they had their Being from him, it is fit he should have service and worship from them so long as they have a Being.

II. My second Reason shall be drawn from that Honor which we all should bring to God. He that is the most excellent and glorious Being may challenge, for he doth deserve glory at the hands of all his Creatures. And they have wickedly forfeited their Being, who do not make their contributions, and cast in something, nay all they can into the Treasury of his Glory. Here I shall more briefly touch upon these few things, but do you ponder them.

First; The Glory of God was the end he aimed at in all that he makes and doth, Prov. 16.4. The Lord hath made all things for himself: And well he might, for there is none higher than himself, none better. He made all for himself, as Heaven, for that is his Throne, so Earth, for that is his Footstool. And as other Creatures, so intelligent rational Creatures, as Angels, so Men, and as Persons, so Families; all of them for himself, all for his glory; and is there not reason that they whom God hath made should mind and pursue that which they were made for? Those that do not live to that purpose, do not live to good purpose; and if they do not live to that end for which God made them, will at last miss of that Reward which they are now so forward to promise themselves.

Secondly; Other Creatures do in their kind honor God; not only the irrational Creatures, but also the inanimate ones; the Heavens and the Firmament; Psal. 19.1. The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament showeth his handy-work. So do the Day and the Night; verse. 2. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; yea, and they go up and down doing it; they compass Sea and Land doing it; verse. 3, 4. There is no Speech nor Language, where their Voice is not heard; their Line is gone out through all the Earth, and their Words to the end of the World. And it would certainly be a shame and reproach to us if any of our Families should be mute and silent, and bring him no glory.

Thirdly; God doth expect glory from us. This is the Tribute he looks should be paid him by us; Mal. 1.6. A Son honoreth his Father, and a Servant his Master; if I then be a Father, where is my honor? And if I be a Master, where is my fear? Saith the Lord of Hosts. God hath been graciously pleased to put himself into all endearing Relations to his People. There you read of his being both a Father and a Master; and those that desire to be his Children, must resolve to be his

Servants; and in order to a happy enjoyment of the Privileges, there must be a cordial and cheerful performance of the duties. We must honor him as a Father, and fear him as a Master. Now the fear of God doth contain in it, as that inward filial and holy affection of the Soul, so the outward Worship of God; and they that do not so fear him, do not honor him: Nay, let your Profession be never so great, and your pretenses to Religion never so high, your not having his Worship in your Families is no other than so far a practical disowning and renouncing him.

Fourthly; The Honor of God is to be dearer to us than our own Interest. This should be laid at the foot of that. John the Baptist was most freely willing to decrease, so that Christ might increase; to dwindle away, and vanish into a worthless inconsiderable nothing, so that Christ might be exalted in the hearts of Men; and it should be so with us, and with all upon whom his Name is called. The design of honoring God, and lifting up of his Name, should be uppermost, and run through our whole course, and be the main principal scope of all our Actions, as is evident from that Scripture Precept, 1 Cor. 10.31. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God. As all our Affections should meet in God as the only Center, so all our Actions should be directed to his glory as the supreme, ultimate and most noble end: But are they obedient to this Command, do they walk according to this excellent Rule, who do not set up the Worship of God in their Families? No, they are far from it, they live in a direct contrariety. Instead of doing all to the glory of God, in their Families they do nothing; they mind their own things, but mind not, regard not the things of God and Jesus Christ; they do neither seek after God, nor live unto him; and what is this but vile ingratitude, and most sordid baseness? What is it but brutish selfishness? When men are confined to, and wrapped up in themselves, do not look above nor beyond themselves; they eat and drink, they wake and sleep for

themselves, they dress and deck, and finify themselves; they labor, and toil, and trade for themselves; they scrape, and hoard, and lay up for themselves, and in this they are unwearied and unsatisfied, never think they are fine enough, nor rich enough, nor great enough; but all this while the great God is most shamefully forgotten and neglected, he is not in their thoughts, nor in their designs.

Fifthly; The Glory of God is to be sought and promoted by us to our utmost. Our best is his due; therefore he calls for the Heart, the whole of it, and for the Male of the Flock. Our All is his due; we have it from him, and we owe it to him; Deut. 6.5. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might. Where you have the Object of your Love, the most proper and principal Object of it, God, and the Reasons, why we should love him, the one is his own Nature, because He is the Lord, Jehovah, who hath his Being of himself, gives Being to all things that are, and accomplishment to his Word and Promises; the other is his Relation to us, or our Interest in him; He is thy God, thine in a Covenant of Grace. Again, there you have the Manner of your Love, or the Degree of it, how high it must reach, how far extend, to all, all thy Heart; to which the Scripture ascribes Understanding, Wisdom and Faith; all thy Soul, which is the seat of the Will and Affections, and with all thy Might; love him as well as we can, blow up our Love to God unto the hottest and most vehement flame. Love him with all your ability. Let your Love to God go as far as your Authority reacheth, and the Power of your Hand, and there let your Love express itself. Honor him in your House, and with your Substance. By all these things it doth evidently appear, the Glory of God should be exceeding dear to us, and industriously served and promoted by us.

Now I will appeal to you in the case, who are Heads of Houses, and ask this one Question, What better way can you take? What course

can you think of that will be more proper and probably successful for the advancing of the Honor of God, than the setting up of his Worship and Religious Exercises in your Families? What can you do more toward it? What better? What is there within the compass of your Power that hath a fairer, a more promising aspect and tendency to this great & noble End? How can you better serve the Interest of God and Godliness? And I do earnestly desire you to spend now and then a little time in thinking seriously with yourselves, what sad, wretched, miserable Families those are, in which there is a great many Creature-comforts, Epicurean Provisions for the Table and the Belly; there is eating and drinking to excess, if not to drunkenness; there is Cards and Dice, Chambering and Wantonness; a great deal of Mirth and Jollity, Vanity and Folly; but there is no Praying there, no Reading of the Scriptures; there is great dressing of Meat, and decking of the Body, but in the midst of all this there is no duty done to God, no Honor brought him, no care taken for precious and immortal Souls. I do pity them, and oh that my Soul might weep, in secret for their sinful neglect! And I do earnestly desire them to remember and lay to heart, that which God hath spoken, and will certainly stand to. He will make that word of his good, to the comfort of his People, and confusion of his Enemies, 1 Sam. 2.30. Them that honor me, I will honor, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. From whence it is plain, that God takes special notice of Persons, their Spirits and Actions, and as they carry toward him, so will he to them. That Tree may expect to fall under a blasting withering Curse, from which the Lord Jesus doth gather no Fruit.

III. My third and last Reason shall be drawn from the equity of the thing: Family-worship is God's due, as you heard before, the Prophet said, Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations, for to thee it doth appertain; it doth of right belong to him; Man cannot lay claim to any Comfort or Blessing as due to him from God for anything that he



hath done, for all is Mercy, than the least of which Man is less, yea, the best of Men, but God may lay claim to fear, and honor, and service, as due to him from Man, and I may say the same in the present case; what Family is there that should not serve and worship thee, O thou King of Nations, O thou King of Saints, for to thee it doth appertain. It is too true, and a sad truth it is, that too many Families in England, yea, and in London do not do it, and I am afraid when all is said that can be said, will not worship God, they are settled upon their Lees, but what Family is there that should not do it. There is none, not the greatest, not the poorest, not those that have most leisure, not those that have most business, not those that live in the greatest fullness and splendor, nor those that are forced to earn their Bread with their hard labor, and in the sweat of their Brows. The more any have, the more abundant they should be in praises, and the more any want, the more frequent and fervent they should be in prayers; whatever their case and condition is, still they do owe this to God. I may very well call it and House-rent, which they are bound to be continually paying to their great Landlord, and for a neglect or default therein he may justly turn them out of Doors, cast them into the open Street, yea, bring them to a Dunghill and Morsel of Bread. I am not censorious, nor do I charge any one, but this is apparent, many that have been topping Men, yea, and made a great Profession, have come to nothing, to a Goal, the Mint, the White-friers, they have broken scandalously, and by that means have made Religion to stink in the Nostrils of those who are no Friends to it; and I would advise them to reflect upon time past, and consider whether they were not wanting to, or remiss in Family-duties, and if they were, let them humble themselves and justify God, and say, Righteous art thou, O Lord; why should they think that God would bless and prosper them, to the enabling them to pay their Debts to Men, if they do not make any Conscience of paying that Tribute which they owe to him? But that is only a serious and seasonable hint

by the way. I am to show you that Family-worship is due to God, and it is so upon these accounts.

First; Upon the account of their Being. I before proved that they are of God; he made you and them too: Now the Prophet saith, Psal. 145.10. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; our Families are his work, and therefore they should praise him.

Secondly; Family worship ought to be conscientiously and constantly performed to God upon the account of those Mercies which they do receive from God. We have personal Mercies, preservation and supply, health and strength, food and raiment, and these do engage us to personal services. Jacob thought so when Gen. 28.20, 21, 22. He vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my fathers house in peace, the Lord shall be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house; and he accordingly did afterward there Build an Altar, which was for the Service and Worship of God. Now by a parity of Reason Family-mercies do oblige unto Family-worship. Alas! What miserable Houses would ours be if God should not look after them, and befriend them; how would they be exposed should he withdraw his protection, and not cover them with his Wing? How would they be straitened and pinched did not he reach out to them his Hand of Bounty, they soon would turn into Houses of Mourning, and Places of Confusion; it is God that by his shining upon our Tabernacles makes them comfortable and pleasant to us, and doth commend and sweeten our Communion together, so that we lie down, and rise up, and live in peace, therefore it is fit and highly becoming that we should serve and worship him together. Those that are drawn with the same Cords of Kindness should draw in the same Yoke of Obedience. Methinks the Father should of his own accord, without a

Monitor, say to his Family as in Psal. 34.3. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

Thirdly; Family-worship is due to God upon the account of his continuing and repeating his Mercies to our Families. How much doth he do for them? And how unwearied is he in doing? We deserve nothing, we have forfeited all, yet his compassion doth not fail, nor is the Stream of Mercy cut off: Must you not say, have ye not reason to say, he daily loads you with his Benefits, and he causeth Mercy and Goodness to follow you? It is his Mercy that maketh us dwell in safety, and sets a Hedge about us and our Houses, and about all that we have on every side, else we should become a prey to the Sons of Violence, or fuel to the greedy devouring Flames. It is he that continueth the peace of our Families, else a perverse froward Spirit would be conjured up in one or other, and give a disturbance to the whole: How great a matter may a little Fire kindle? It is he that gives you the Comforts of your Families, spreads your Tables, and fills your Cups, and giveth you all things to enjoy, 1 Tim. 6.17. Your Cisterns would quickly be empty, had they not recruits from the Eternal Fountain. It is he that prevents breaches in your Families, sinful breaches through anger and discontent, jars and fallings out, so that you would be Wolves and Tigers one to another; afflictive breaches, that would be Heart-breakings and clothe you in Sables, and fetch Rivers of Tears from your Eyes, and such a Groan as was uttered by Naomi, Ruth 1.21, 22. Call me Marah, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me; I was full, and the Lord hath made me empty. How easily else might Death come with his Dart and stab one, and with his Scythe mow down another, so that the Parents shall sit down lamenting, and refuse to be comforted, and a numerous Family molder away into nothing. It hath been thus in other Houses, why is it not so in yours? But because of God's sparing Mercy he hath not given Death a Commission: To instance in all that God doth for us, to

give in the total Sum of his favors is beyond our power, we have reason to say with holy David, Psal. 139.17, 18. How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them? If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with thee. Under thy careful watchful Eye, thy securing comforting Wing, and surely all this doth greatly oblige Families to own, serve and honor God; the Bonds of God are upon us, there is the Bond of his Law, the Bond of his Covenant, and the Bond of Kindness; let us not break these Bonds, lest he bind us in the Bonds of Affliction, and Fetters of Wrath: As it would be a burning shame, so an high provocation, if they who receive so much from God, should return little or nothing to him.

Fourthly; Family-worship is due to God, because of that necessary and absolute dependence which they have upon him for the future. He that gave particular Persons their Being, doth continue them in being, else they would drop into the Grave. Thou holdest our soul in life, and sufferest not our feet to be moved, Psal. 66.9. God by his Word created the World, and the like Word of his Power is required for its preservation, else it would return to its ancient Chaos, Heb. 1.3. He upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power; so he that made our Families must maintain them, he that raised them up must keep them up; how soon would they sink if his Everlasting Arm were not underneath! In the Church, he that planteth is nothing, and he that watereth is nothing, but God that giveth the increase; so in the House, he that ordereth and commandeth is nothing, and they that assist and labor are nothing, but God that giveth the blessing and the success. I desire you to bestow some thoughts upon that one Scripture, Job 8.6. He shall make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous; where I desire you to take notice of these few things.

First; That it is God's work to make Habitations prosperous; yea, it is his alone; all endeavors are vain and fruitless without his concurrence. The diligent Hand indeed is said to make rich, but another place tells us, the Blessing of the Lord makes rich. Man's diligence and God's blessing do excellently together, then much good will come of it; but when Man works alone, he doth but beat the Air, and loseth his labor, nothing will prosper, that God doth not command so to do; in Spirituals, the Spices will not flow forth unless the North and South Wind blow upon the Garden: In Temporals, the Ship must lie still and not reach its desired Haven, except the Divine Blessing fill the Sails. God's Curse at the Root will blast Families, and make the greatest and most flourishing of them fade and dwindle into nothing.

Secondly; Our Reason will tell us, and so doth that Scripture, That righteous Families stand fairest for God's Blessing; I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way, said David, I will walk within my house with a perfect heart, O when wilt thou come to me! Psal. 101. A person of such a Heart and Way may desire and wish for God, humbly invite him, and believably expect him with smiles and sweet manifestations of himself, and gracious favorable Providences. It is most probable and most rational to conclude that God will prosper Habitations of Righteousness; this looks most consonant to his Nature, most agreeable to his Justice, and for this there is the greatest assurance in his Promises. It is a righteous thing with God that Habitations of Wickedness should be Instances of Divine Vengeance, that Habitations of Uncleanness should be Habitations for Owls and Satyrs, that where the Tables are full of Vomit, the Houses should spew them out; but righteous Persons and Habitations of Righteousness are under the Blessing of Heaven, and so most like to flourish, Psal. 5.12. Thou, Lord, wilt bless the

righteous, with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield. But then,

Thirdly; The great Question will be, What it is that doth make or denominate any House an Habitation of Righteousness; and to that I answer, the giving of everyone his due; the performing all righteous acts toward Men, and of all holy acts toward God, that is an Habitation of Righteousness in which there is the true fear and worship of God. There may be a righteous Person in a Family that is wicked, there was a righteous Noah in a wicked World, a just Lot in a wicked Sodom, a Diamond in a sink, a good Ahijah in the House of Jereboam who made Israel to sin, Saints in the House of Nero, who was at that day the Monster of Men, though there have been as bad since, and worse too, but this did not make those Houses Habitations of Righteousness, notwithstanding that they were Habitations of Devils; there must be the Families fearing, serving, and worshipping of God, else it is not, it cannot truly be called an Habitation of Righteousness: So much may well suffice to be spoken to the first set of Arguments for the proving to you, that the setting up of the Worship of God in our Families is no more than our reasonable service.

## II.

### Second Arguments for the setting up of Family-worship and Duty

I proceed now, according to the method before propounded, to a second order or company of Arguments for the setting up of Family-

worship and Duty, and they shall be drawn from the Heads and Governors of Families, and there will be several of them, which I advise and earnestly desire every one of you seriously to consider; for what will Arguments signify, if they be not duly weighed? Prov. 24.32. Solomon tells us, that passing by the Field and Vineyard of the slothful Man void of understanding, the Wall whereof was broken down, and it was overgrown with Thorns, and Nettles covered the face thereof; He saw it, and more than so, he looked upon it, whistly, curiously, again and again, and he considered it, he laid it to his Heart, and he considered it well, and thereupon he received instruction; Oh that you would do the like as to those things which you do find in the Scriptures, and in the holy Discourses of your Faithful Ministers against sin, and for duty, and in particular for Family-duty, consider them well, that so you may receive instruction: And the good Lord, without whom we poor Worms can do nothing, grant that what hath been, and shall be said to this purpose may be accompanied with his holy Spirit, and so come with such a power upon your Souls, as that his glory may be a gainer, and his worship may be carefully and constantly performed for the future in those Families, (if there be any such in this numerous Congregation) in which hitherto it hath been shamefully neglected.

I. You that are Governors of Families, Masters or Mistresses, are charged with them. Your Families are your Charge, God hath committed them to your Care and Government; as they are to act for you, so you are to care for them. Kings have a great power, and that maketh some of them Oppressive and Tyrannical. They have great Honor, and that makes them Proud and Lofty; but all of them have a great Trust, the whole Kingdom is committed to them; and they should not only endeavor to secure their own Prerogative, but also public good, the peace, welfare and prosperity of their people; this they are all of them bound to do, and those that do it are great

Blessings. Ministers also have a great Charge; as it is an honorable, so it is a weighty thing to be a Minister of Jesus Christ, for the Churches of which they be Pastors are committed to them; they are to look to the Flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them Overseers, and they are to watch for the Peoples Souls, that they may feed them with understanding and sound knowledge, and also preserve them from those that lie in wait to deceive, and from every path of the destroyer; and O that while we do all, with the Apostle Paul, Magnify our Office; we may all be careful to fulfil our Ministry, and do the work of our Office!

And so, that I may return to the business before us, Masters and Mistresses of Families have no small Charge, no little Trust, for their Families are committed to them; the Family is a Body, bigger or less, and the Master is the Head of it, and he should rule, order and influence all the Members thereof; they have both a power and a trust, a power, and so set over them; a trust, and so charged with them; and as they would not be deprived of their power, so they ought not to betray their trust; you that are Rulers of Families will be known in your places, it is fit you should be so. I pray be good in your places; and as you will maintain your Authority, and make use of your power, be true to your trust too; some of you will say in some cases that you will not abate an Ace, stand as much upon it, and be as exact here; you will be Kings in your own Houses, you ought to be so, God hath made you so, but be Prophets and Priests also, in such a manner take, and keep, and use the Jurisdiction, as that laboring in Prayer, in the Word and Doctrine, may not slip through your Fingers. As Magistrates, so Ministers, and Parents, and Masters ought to rule in the fear of God.

For you are to remember that you are entrusted with the Souls of your Families, as well as with their Bodies; and you ought to seek and



endeavor the good of their Souls as well as the good of their Bodies; I mean, both of their Children, and of their Servants, yea, and more too, because the Soul is best, and the welfare and comfort of the Body depends upon the happiness of the Soul. Indeed the Soul may be in a thriving condition Godward, but the Body crazy and wasting; the Soul may be of an healthful Constitution, but the Body sickly and weak, as is clear from that of Paul, 2 Cor. 4.16. Though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; and that this was the case of Gaius, I am very apt to conclude from that kind and friendly wish of John in his third Epistle, I wish that thy body may prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. But if the Soul be void of Knowledge and Grace, if there be not a saving Light in the Head, nor the Law of God in the Heart, the Body will come to lie down at last in misery and sorrow; coddle and pamper it never so much, care and cark for it as you will, the issue will at last be dreadful, the compositum, i.e., the whole Man will come to ruin, Hos. 4.6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, not only deformed as a Person is for want of an Eye, but destroyed, cut off, utterly ruined and undone; and ought not the greatest care be taken for the prevention of that?

We read in 1 Tim. 5.6. If any man provide not for his own, specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Though he doth not deny the Faith in words, yet he doth in deeds; he hath practically renounced Christianity by his not living up to the Laws and Rules thereof; and he is worse than an Infidel by his falling short of them. He is defective and wanting in that which they perform, though he lives in a Valley of Vision, though he sits under the bright and glorious Beams of the Sun of Righteousness displayed in the Everlasting Gospel, yet he is outdone by the very Heathen, who have no more than the dark glimmering Light of Nature, which is like a Candle burnt down to the Socket; so

that it is the Duty of all Parents and Masters to provide for their own Houses.

But here the Question will be, What are they to provide? What? All that is convenient for them; according to that Prayer of Holy and Wise Agur, in Prov. 30.8, feed me with food convenient for me. To be sure they must provide things necessary, if it be in their power, but necessary for what? Only for the Body? Meat, and Drink, and Clothes, and Lodging, Money, and Wages? Are these all the things that are necessary and convenient for them? Is this the supplying of all their need? Is this all that the Lord requires and expects at their hands? Surely no, it is true, this is a part of their duty, but it is the least, and lowest part; this he provides for the Brute, but not for the Man; for the Cabinet, but not for the Jewel; they should so provide for them, as that it may be well with them every way, to all intents and purposes; their Families have precious Souls, as well as comely Bodies, craving Souls as well as hungry Bodies, and they should so provide for their Souls, as that it may not be their fault if it be not well with their Souls, and that both in time, and to Eternity. In the 2nd of Peter, 1, 2 ver. the Apostle Peter speaking of God, saith, His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto Life, and Godliness. O let us learn to admire and endear this God who is so gracious and liberal unto us! Now let us be followers of him as dear Children; this is an excellent Copy for us to write after who are House holders; let us provide for ours, all that is necessary for this their Temporal Life, yea, and all that is necessary for Godliness.

But now, can anyone tell how they provide for the Souls of their Families, which are under their Government, and committed to their care, who do not set up the Worship of God in their Families? Who do nothing towards their instruction and sanctification, nothing towards the making of them understanding, gracious, and holy? Are

those Families well provided for in which there is no serving of God, no religious exercises, no Praying, no Catechizing, nor reading of the Scriptures, no Repeating of Sermons, no Singing of Psalms, no holy Discourses about God, and Jesus Christ, and the things of God; no Holy Instructions, nor good Councils, nor provoking one another to love and good works? We shall indeed sometimes hear people say of such or such a Man, O, he is a Man of a generous Spirit, a brave House-keeper; but ask them wherein, how doth that appear? The Answer is, by his keeping a good Table, a great Table, he buyeth the best Meat the Market doth afford, and a great deal of it, so that the Servants have enough, and to spare, and you may see many poor lying at his door, who are relieved there; and this is indeed good and commendable, and it is to be desired, that all whose Estates will reach it were such, they would be no losers by it; it is one way to bring down a blessing upon their Callings, and the works of their hands; but give me leave to tell that Man, if this be all, if he stop here, and his brave House-keeping amount to no more than this, in a word, if he doth not set up the Worship of God in his Family, he is a pitiful, a miserable House-keeper, his House is the way to Hell; though he keeps a Great Table, yet he keeps a wicked House, a godless, graceless House, he fills Bodies, and starves Souls, his Dogs have as much reason to commend him, as his Wife, and Children, and Servants. Well, that is the first thing; and oh that it may abide with you who are Governors of Families; sit down and think seriously upon it, that your Families are your charge, you are charged with the Souls of your Families, God hath put them into your hand, and committed them to your care, and therefore you are obliged to look after them; and as God hath given them to you, so it is your duty to train and bring them up for God: But this will meet us again in the way of this Discourse, and then I shall speak something more to it.

II. You are accountable for your Families, as charged with them, so responsible for them. We read in the 25th of Matthew, 14, &c. of a Man Travelling into a far Country, who called unto him his Servants, and delivered unto them his goods, to one five Talents, to another two, and to a third but one; after a time he returned, and reckoned with them. God hath committed to every one of us some Talents, to some more, to some fewer, and he will reckon with us all for them, and inquire what we have done with them; one hath a Talent of Parts, another of Power, another of Interest, a fourth of Riches; do not you let them lie dead upon your hands, but be good Husbands, Trade with them, my Friends, trade with them for God, and know as God will reckon with you for your Talents, so for Persons that are committed to your Charge; and as God said to Cain, Gen. 4.9. Where is Abel thy Brother? So he will say to thee, where is thy Wife, where thy Son, where thy Daughter, where is thy Man Servant, where thy Maid? Masters of Families are accountable both for the Bodies and the Souls under their roofs.

First, they are accountable for the bodies that are in their Families; you know they are so, not only to God, but likewise to the Magistrate, and to the Law. So that if any of them doth miscarry, and dies a violent death, there is a very strict search made into it, the Coroners Inquest sits upon the body, all suspected Persons are called and examined, and the great Question is, How did this Person come by his death? Though it be the meanest Servant in the House, the Scullion, or Kitchen-Boy, yet it is not passed by, nor is it fit it should: No Murderer ought to be Pardoned, that is a standing Law which binds in all Ages, and Places, Gen. 9.6, who so sheddeth Mans blood, by Man shall his blood be shed; let the man destroyed have been never so poor, and mean, and despicable for his outward Condition, and let the Murderer be what he will, though' a person of never so great Quality, as they Phrase it, yet he must die for it. God hath said,

by Man shall his blood be shed. If the Master himself was the cause of his Servants death, he shall answer for it, and life shall go for life, blood, for blood; if he Poisoned the meanest Servant he had, or if he starved him, it must be so; and that Scripture tells you the reason of the thing lieth in this, because Man was made in the Image of God; and there was afterward another Law made, Numb. 35.31. Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a Murderer, which is guilty of death, but he shall be surely put to death; so that as the Jewish Doctors say, though he could give all the Riches of the World, and the Avenger of Blood were persuaded into a willingness to pass it by, yet it could not be done. Let Magistrates therefore consider what they do, when they Pardon Murderers, whom God himself hath devoted to destruction. But

Secondly, they are accountable for the Souls that are in their Families; for God doth highly value the Souls which he hath Created, and as carefully and curiously looks after Souls, as his Law enjoins and requires Men in place of Power and Authority to look after the Bodies of Men, and to judge and avenge their blood, when it hath been shed by wicked and cruel hands, and when they do miscarry, as too many do, thousands, myriads, millions do, he will make inquisition for their blood, and see how it came to pass; and if their Parents, or Masters be guilty of it, he will require it at their hands; and there are too many that will be one day found with their hands full of blood; there are some Men among us, that do corrupt and taint the Judgments of their Children, and Servants, and Poison their Minds with their Cursed Doctrines, and Damnable Heresies, (I ask no pardon for that expression, as too harsh and severe, for it is Scripture Language) and by their sinful practices, and vile debaucheries, which are as bad as Rats-bane, and they shall be sure to answer for it. Others there are that do starve their Souls by not teaching them the way and fear of the Lord, not instilling good

Principles into them, by not setting holy Examples before them, which they should imitate; not taking them by the hand, and leading them in the ways of Righteousness, the midst of those Paths of Judgments in which they ought to go; by living themselves like so many Heathens, and Brutes, and teaching others to do the same, bringing them up for Hell, and fitting them for destruction; as if they had taken up a resolution that they would not serve the Lord, nor go to Heaven, no, nor any that belong to them, if they can prevent it; and these Men likewise shall answer it to God. Such shall be dealt with in the same manner as God threatened he would do with the Prophet, in case of his being false to his trust, and unfaithful to those unto whom he was sent. You may see it in Ezek. 3.17, 18; Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman to the house of Israel, therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

People are in eminent danger of being seduced by False Teachers, of being prevailed against by Temptations of Satan, and his instruments; Ministers must watch over them, they must go themselves to God for light, teaching instruction, and be faithful in teaching, when taught, and in giving out what they have received. Now mark, when I say unto the Wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his evil way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hands; which, saith Erasmus, is fulmen non verbum, not a word but a Thunder-bolt. Duty is safe, as long as that is done by Ministers, they are out of danger, out of harms way, they shall be accepted and rewarded by God, whatever the issue be as to the people among whom they labor, Isa. 49.5. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength; but neglect and carelessness is damnable, it brings upon Ministers the guilt of other

men's blood, and the loss of their own Lives and Souls; and believe it, so it will upon you who are Parents, and Masters of Families.

Oh, consider it, my dear Friends, Beloved and longed for, seriously consider it, you are, as I formerly said, and without doubt you yourselves know, Prophets in your own Houses, there you are to Teach and Rule. God hath made you Watchmen to your own Houses, and it is your business to study their peace and safety, and to seek their good; it is your business to acquaint them with their Duty, that they may do it, and to warn them of their danger, that they may avoid it; you are to cause your light to shine before them, that so in your light, they may see light; you are to instruct them, that they may not be naught for lack of knowledge; you are to show them, and go before them in the way that they should go, that they may not wander and go directly to Hell, because they had none to direct them; in a word, you are to make use of all means possible, that both you and yours may prove and approve what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, and so be, and at last found to be wise unto Salvation. But if you, if any of you have been and will continue to be slothful, careless, negligent, and wanting to your duty herein, your Children and Servants may die in their ignorance, and iniquity; but verily you shall not escape unpunished, for their blood shall be required at your hands, the holy and righteous God will require it, who is the great avenger of blood. And here are two things that I lay before you.

First, Your wretched neglect of Family-Duties may bring upon you the Curse of your Children and Servants. I have known some, when they have for their flagitious Lives been Condemned to the Gallows, and not far from Execution, laid their ill life at the Parents door, crying out of the fondness of their Mothers for winking at and concealing of their faults, and of the neglect of their Fathers giving

them no better Education, and setting before them such wicked and abominable examples; and what do you think they and others in the same case with them are and will be doing forever in the other World, in the anguish of their Souls, and the midst of intolerable Torments, when such poor Creatures come to be cast upon a bed of flames, and in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone? When they come to feel the sinking weight, and scorching heat of the wrath and indignation of a provoked God, they will certainly curse themselves for their former follies and wicked courses, and they will curse their Old Companions, whom now they take so much pleasure in, and will wish they had never seen their faces, yea, and they will curse you too; and we may rationally conclude their passionate breaking out into such expressions as these, I might have done better had I been Educated and brought up better; I might have done my duty to God, had my Parents or my Master done their duty to me; I might have been kept from the path of the Destroyer, and cleansed my way, and come to a Blessed Eternity, had I been taught to take heed unto myself, and to my way, according to the word. Had my Father and my Master instructed me, I might have known as much, and done as well as those that are now saved, and in Heaven. But instead of taking pains to make me good, their great desire and design was to make me Rich, and Great in the World, and so they have made me miserable. I have all my days taken wicked Courses, because they never took any care to instill into me right and holy Principles. Had I but seen or heard them reading the Holy Scriptures, and other good books themselves, or to their Families, I might have taken them up, and read them too, and got the knowledge of God, and myself, and my duty; but they were for Romances, and Plays, and Cards, the Devils Books, and so we spent and lost our time and ourselves too. Had I heard them Praying in their Families, seeking the face and favor of God, begging his Spirit and Grace, I might have prayed too, and sought God too, and begged



the life of my precious Soul, and who knows but I might have obtained mercy. But instead of Praying, there was Swearing and Cursing, foolish and wicked talk, and I learnt their ways; they set bad examples, and I was ready to follow them; they struck the Spark, and I was like Tinder catching immediately, their examples were very vicious, and my Nature was as bad, and now my eternal ruin follows upon it; they were Worldly, and so was I, they wicked, and so was I, they minded earthly things, and so did I; they lived without God in the World, and so did I; they carried themselves like so many Heathen, and so did I, and now I am in the place of endless misery, out of which there is no possibility of being delivered, nor making an escape, and in which there is no hope of any comfort, ease, alleviation or abatement of trouble and sorrow, infinite mercy itself will not grant the least drop of Water for the cooling and refreshment of any that are here, therefore cursed, yea forever cursed be the day that I descended of such Parents, and cursed be the day on which I was bound an Apprentice to such a Master, and that ever my Lines were cast in such Families.

Secondly; As this will bring upon you the Curse of those poor miserable and eternally Lost Creatures, so it may justly expose you to the Wrath and Fury of a Righteous God, who for your neglect of him, and unfaithfulness to your Trust, and wicked Cruelty to those poor Souls, may justly punish you with everlasting Destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his Power, for their Blood crieth loud for Vengeance to be executed upon you.

III. Your present safety, and the safety of your Houses doth very much depend upon this. By a holy care herein your confidence in God may be strengthened, and your comfortable expectations from him raised. On the other side, by your neglect hereof, both will be lessened and enfeebled. You see there are two Branches in this

Assertion, I shall speak distinctly unto them, and by Instances prove and manifest the truth of them.

First; Your being wanting to the Worship of God and Religious Exercises in your Families, is the way to expose you and them to present Judgments; and while you continue so, you cannot rationally hope it should be otherwise, but may have a dreadful sound always in your Ears, and that in Prosperity the destroyer will come upon you; Job 15.21. You may spend your day, yea day and night too in a fearful expectation of being devoured, but have nothing to warrant your hoping that God will be either a Sun for your comfort, or a Shield for your defense; for the case is evident, that your neglect of God may justly provoke him to a neglect of you; and what shadow of reason can you show another, or please yourselves with, why God should do anything for the promoting or securing your welfare, when you will do nothing for the keeping up and advancing of his Honor? Why should you walk safely when you will not walk uprightly and in your integrity? Why should he make your Families prosperous, if notwithstanding all that is or can be said, you will not make them religious? You may find in Isa. 5, that when the Vineyard brought forth nothing but wild Grapes, after great cost bestowed upon it, and no less pains taken with it, the Hedge was to be taken away, and the Wall to be broken down, and the Clouds commanded to Rain no more upon it. Nay, not only a total neglect of Family-duty, but an omission in one point may, yea hath awakened and armed Divine Justice to the ruin of a house, as is plain in the case of Eli. He was a good and holy Man, in a time of public danger, his heart trembled for the Ark of God, by which we know that it lay very near it; and therefore I do not at all question but there was the Worship of God in his House, and that he had made Conscience of teaching and instructing his Children and Servants, but his Sons were Sons of Belial, that knew not the Lord so as to fear him; vile and wicked

wretches they were, openly abominably profane: The good old Man heard of it, and upon the hearing was grieved at his very heart, and for it he reprov'd them too: But he was wanting in one thing; he spake to them in too soft and silken words; he was too mild with his Sons, how angry soever he was with their sins: He did not exercise all his Authority and Power, nor draw against them the Sword of Justice; he blamed them, but he did not punish them, he did not use that severity toward them, which for their notorious Crimes they had deserved. Now do but read, how severe upon this account God threatened to be both upon him, and his whole House. He said, He would do that, at which both the Ears of everyone that heard it should tingle. And indeed so they well might, because it was so terrible; 1 Sam. 2 31, 32, 33. Behold the days come that I will cut off thine Arm, and the Arm of thy Fathers House, that there shall not be an Old Man in thine House, and thou shalt see an Enemy in my Habitation, in all the Wealth which God shall give Israel, and there shall not be an Old Man in thine House forever; and the Man of thine which I shall not cut off from mine Altar, shall be to consume thine Eyes, and to grieve thy Heart, and all the increase of thine House shall die in the flower of their Age. I beseech everyone to believe, before your own sad and dismal experience be the cutting Argument to convince you, that all sin is of a ruining and destructive nature; not only sins of commission, but sins of omission are so; not only acts of Hostility against God, and open Rebellion, but contempt and neglect of him; not only downright affronts, but the nonpayment of that Homage which is his due; it will make the Root of a Family rottenness, and the Blossoms to come up like Dust; it will blast and wither the Off-spring of an House; it will utter consume the Timber of it, though it were all heart of Oak; it would pull down the Walls of it, though as thick as those of a Castle. So History tells us in the voice said to that wicked and bloody Emperor Phocas, though thou raise thy Walls as high as Heaven, the sin within will spoil all. Sin will

undermine the Foundation of a House, and shake the whole Fabric, and like Gunpowder, blow it up, and bury it in its own Ruins. Now consider this all ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver; Psal. 50.22. As he will not always strive, so he will not always bear. Some years he came to the barren Tree, expecting fruit, and finding none, he exercised much patience under frequent disappointments, but at length patience gave place to prudent Justice, and he said, Cut it down, why cumberst it the ground? But all this may be prevented if men would be Friends to themselves, and study and practice those things which belong to, and make for their peace, before they are hidden from their Eyes. But now,

Secondly; Your worshipping of God in your Families, and keeping up Religious Exercises there, may be a means of preserving their peace, and keeping off those Judgments which otherwise might break in upon them, Wisdom is a defense, and Money is a defense, but Wisdom is the better of the two, for it giveth life to them that have it, Eccles. 7.12. There may be other things used for our safety, Locks, Bolts, Bars, &c. but that Wisdom which consists in the Fear of God, in the Love and Service of God, is the best. He that walketh in Righteousness shall dwell on high, his place of defense shall be the munition of Rocks, where Ruin cannot come at him; Isa. 33.16. I shall for the evidencing of this produce two great Instances.

The former Instance shall be holy Job: And in him we will take notice of two things; his care of Duty, and God's care of him. We will begin with his care of Duty, and God himself, who is the faithful and true Witness, and cannot lie, did testify thus of him, That he was a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil. He was indeed a singular eminent Saint, one by himself, not a Man like him in all the Earth, not one that had grown up to that stature, attained

that pitch of Holiness which he had done: So much is said of him in general; Job 1.1. Yea and in verse. 8. God himself gave this very report and character of him to the Devil, his mortal Enemy. Now let us take notice of what is more particularly recorded concerning him, in verse. 4, 5, of that Chapter. His Sons had been lovingly, and like Brethren, feasting at one another's Houses, and, as became them, invited their Sisters also. Job now could not but be greatly pleased with that Brotherly Love which was among his Children, yet he was jealous over them with a godly Jealousy, and had his fears, lest in their feasting they should forget themselves, and do something that might offend God, grieve his Spirit, and provoke his Displeasure against them, and therefore he offered Burnt-Offerings according to the number of them all. He did not offer one single Sacrifice for them all, and so make short work of it, but he offered for each one a Sacrifice. Neither did he do this alone by himself, but with them, together with them, therefore it is said, that he sent and sanctified them; but what are we to understand by that expression, what may be the meaning thereof? I answer negatively; he did not sanctify them by working Grace in them, and infusing into them holy Habits. There is never a gracious Parent but would do it for all his Children if he could He that is holy himself, would have others so too. I wish, said Paul to Agrippa, that not only thou, but all that hear me this day were as I am, saving these Bonds. But it is not in their power, none can make saving impressions upon the Adamantine Heart, but he that hath an Arm of Omnipotency; none can give the least Grace to Man but he that hath all Grace in himself; therefore affirmatively, by Job 's sanctifying them some understand his praying to God that he would sanctify them; and doubtless he did so; while some altogether seek the World, Greatness, Riches for their Children, a good Man doth above all seek Grace for himself, and for his Children; he will go a begging to God for his Children, begging of Grace, Lord, whatever thou deniest my Children, do thou give them Grace; though thou wilt

not make them great, yet do thou make them good; thus Abraham, Gen. 17.18. O that Ishmael may live before thee, that his Soul might live, that he might live in thy favor, and according to thy command, so live as to please and obey thee; and certainly this is an excellent way for the sanctifying of our own Hearts, and the Hearts of others. The effectual servant Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much in this case. Prayer that comes from Grace in him that puts it up may obtain Grace from him, on whose behalf he is a Suitor. But there is a late Learned and Holy Commentator, viz. Mr. Caryl, understands it thus, He sent and sanctified them, i.e. He sent them good Instructions, holy Counsels, and wholesome advice; gave them notice of the Sacrifice that was to be, and ordered them to prepare themselves that they might be in a due frame to wait upon God in such an Ordinance, so that he did not perform this Duty alone, but they were to join with him in it; and it is said, He did this continually, i.e. frequently, as often as occasion for the doing of it offered itself, so often he thus worshipped God himself, and called his Children to bear their part with him in it.

We have seen the Piety of this Holy Man, now let us see his Safety; if any ask what he was the better for this, I answer, a great deal; though Job did not serve God for his Hire, yet he did not serve God for Nought; he did not make any temporal worldly advantages his end of serving God, yet he found and felt that it was not in vain for him to serve God, who is not wont to be behind-hand with the Children of Men; he richly pays those that do but a Job of work for him; so he did Cyrus, much more those who are steadfast and immovable abounding in his work. Job here takes care of his Family that they should serve and worship God, and God took care of his substance, Job 1.10 The Devil that was no Friend to God, nor to his Honor, took notice thereof, and could not but own it; Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every

side? God hath two sorts of Hedges, there is a hedge of thorns, and this God speaks of, Hos. 2.6. I will hedge up thy way with thorns; that was to keep her from Idolatry, from running after the God's of the Heathen, whom she called her Lovers; she should have little heart to go after them, by reason of those sorrows and troubles that would meet her; it is a great mercy when God orders out difficulties, and pains, and vexation in a sinful course, when he hedgeth them about with Thorns, so that they cannot wander from God, and turn aside to crooked paths, with the workers of iniquity without pricking their Fingers, and piercing themselves thorough with many sorrows; this speaks the Love of God, and is one of his special favors. But this Hedge which God had set about Job was of another nature, a hedge of gracious and powerful protection; a strong hedge, sufficient to reach its end; a hedge that was nowhere thin and weak, there was no gap to be found in it, which an Enemy could enter in at, till God afterward for wise and holy ends gave leave. This must of necessity be a good Hedge, because it was of God's own making; thou hast set it: and it also was a large Hedge, fetching a great compass, for it took in all; it was about him, his person, thou hast set it about him, about his Soul and his Body, about his Graces and his inward Comforts, his Life, and Health, and Strength; and about his House, the Habitation itself, and all within Doors, Wife, and Children, and Servants, and all his Goods; yea, and about all that he had, though at never so great a distance from home, his Fields, and his Cattle, his Grass, and Hay, and Corn, his great things, and his little things too; his Camels and Oxen, yea, and his Asses, and Sheep, and Lambs, all that he had; and the Scripture adds, it was on every side. He could look no way but he might see Salvation, so that neither Devil could come at him, nor any other Enemy, without Divine permission: Indeed afterward as that Chapter tells us, when the Devil, that inveterate and implacable Enemy falsely accused and charged that good Man, telling God that he had all along been no better than a Mercenary, and that a change

of Providence would make a change in him; if Providence did but frown upon him, he would quickly fall a Cursing of God, a very touch would turn him. God did for the glory of his own Grace, and the vindication of his Servants honor, give the Devil leave to try what he could do by himself and his Instruments, at the same instant resolving to allay the bitterness of the Cup, to support him under the burden, and at last to bring him off with honor and without loss, or any cause of complaint, which was at last done; for Job 42.12. God blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; yet he then had a Blessing and that a great one; there was not only protection, but likewise a benediction; for Satan could not but acknowledge, that God had blessed the work of Job 's hands, and that he experienced the power of that blessing, and reaped the fruit of it, for his substance was increased in the Land; by all which you may plainly see that the Father of Lies (though his design was to bespatter Job) did yet speak truth when he said, Job did not serve God for naught; and as he did not, so nobody else ever did, nor ever shall; God is too good and gracious to suffer that, such a reproach shall never cleave to his glorious Majesty.

The other Instance which I told you I would bring for the proving of this, that Family-worshipping of God may be a singular means to keep off present Judgments is a tremendous and very remarkable Providence which while I was studying upon this Subject I happily met with in Polanus his Syntagma; liber 5, cap. 22, de terrae motu. And it is this, In the Year of our Lord 1584, there was an Earthquake in Switzerland, in the Territory of Bern, in which one Hill being removed out of its place, and violently carried and dashed against another, did overwhelm and bury an whole Village that consisted of fourscore and ten Houses, not any of them being spared and escaping, save only the part of one House, in which the Master of the



Family, with his Wife and Children were together at that very time upon their bended Knees praying and seeking of God.

IV. Setting up the Worship of God in Families is the way to promote your own Interest in them; for God hath made a most sweet and gracious connection of his own glory and Men's good, so that in seeking the former they find the latter; in keeping God's Commandments there is great reward; upon seeking first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, other things shall be added, cast in as an overplus. Folly, Sin makes Men and Women cheap and contemptible. Godliness puts a Beauty upon them, makes their Faces shine, and renders them amiable, considerable, truly great in the Eyes of those that know them.

But it may be, some of you do think yourselves not at all concerned here, and that you need not take any care nor bestow any thoughts upon this, for your Interest is great and safe enough, and you can well enough secure and maintain it with the greatest ease; are not you the Master and the Mistress, and have not you the Purse and the whole power in your hands? And are not all under your Roof under you? So that if any of them will not know their places, nor keep their distance; If they will not be observant of your orders, obedient to your commands, nor carry towards you with a due respect, you can make them smart for it, by pinching them in their comforts, making them feel the weight of your hand, and if that will not do, by turning them out of Doors. Let them affront or slight you if they dare. Very well, my Friends, this is great, and you are somebody, at least in your own Eyes; and it must be granted that all this you may do, and being done it may turn to account; but all this doth not, will not make things so sure, nor strengthen your interest so much as you may imagine; no, no, be assured of this, that when all is done, your having the Power and the Purse in your hands, will not befriend you at so

great a rate, nor so effectually secure to you the love, and fear, and awe of those with whom you have to do, as exemplary Piety, a Religious Life, and putting the Duties of Godliness in practice; I well know, some Spirits are very rugged and boisterous, not easily drawn and bowed to their Duty, all means must be used, and all little enough; but this is certain, it is no prudence, when others are applied, to omit the best. The Smith would show much folly in spending his time, and tiring himself in beating and knocking of cold Iron, when by putting it into the Fire till it be red hot, he may form and fashion it as he pleaseth. It is a gross Error in Men proceeding much from Pride and Brutish Passion, and plainly discovers their Ignorance to conceive, that their huffing and hectoring, their ranting and raging at their Children and Servants will procure them such a respect and esteem among them, as Holiness will do, and Prayer, and living in a conscientious discharge of the Duties of their Places, and that upon a Threefold Account.

First; It is the way to engage God on your side; who hath said, He will honor those that honor him: Do Men study to exalt God, they themselves shall be exalted; if his Name be precious to them; theirs shall be so to him, I will honor them, saith God, he will do it himself, and that by taking them up at last to Heaven, and clothing them there with everlasting glory; yea, and he will make others honor them too. God speaking in Psal. 91, of one that loves him, that loves his Name, and Interest, speaks of many things that he will do for him, and among the rest he promiseth to honor him, and he will be as good as his word; it shall be done both in Time, and to Eternity.

Secondly; This is the way to instill into your Families right Principles; that fear and respect which you have with them upon the other account is altogether forced, you do by mere violence extort it from them, and so it is not kindly, nor will it be lasting: they will

reverence you before your Face, but what will they do behind your Back? Multiply very hard thoughts of you, and speak as hard words against you where they safely may; but in this way of holy Duty you take a course to rectify their Spirits, and sow in them those Seeds that may, and in all likelihood will spring up to your own comfort and advantage, for while you do endeavor to teach them the good will of God concerning them, and to instill into their Hearts the love and fear of his holy Name, they will at the same time, and with the same pains and labor be taught to pay that reverence and fear which they owe to you; show them the way to honor God, and they will thereby learn to give that honor which is due to you; and it is to be hoped that what they do now, will proceed from an inward Principle, and what doth so is of all things the most durable and like to hold.

Thirdly; Religion acted to the Life carrieth a Majesty along with it. It was the Image of God instampt upon Man at first that did so excellently fit and qualify him for the Government of this inferior World; it was this shining in his Countenance that struck an awe upon the other Creatures, and made them submit to him. As soon as Sin had defaced that Image, and he fallen short of the glory of God, they threw off the Yoke, and grew stubborn and rebellious; the more this Image is restored to Men, the more there is of God appearing in them, the more they live to God, and walk with him, the more will they recover their lost honor; a Crown upon the Head, a Sword, a Scepter in the Hand will not render a Person so truly honorable as Religion will. This strikes an awe even upon carnal Men, when in the Company of such, and often restrains them, and keeps them from those exorbitances into which their own cursed Lusts would hurry them; if this doth not gain you their Hearts, so that they shall be knit to you, it will commend you to their Consciences. Let Men think, and say, and act as they please, there is no such probable, no such effectual way for the working in the minds of people a real and

permanent goodness, for the making of Children loving and dutiful, and of Servants industrious and faithful, as is an instilling into them the Principles of Religion, and teaching them the good fear of the Lord; when this is once done, your Hearts may trust in them, and you will find them devoted to the pleasing of you, and set for the promoting your Interest, that will preserve them from running into such sins as others do not stick at; it will make them tremble at that which others will commit with greediness; they shall not be supinely careless and negligent in your business, nor shall they be Companions of Fools, running with them into excess of Riot; they shall not pilfer and steal from you, that they may have wherewith to gratify and fulfil a Lust; they shall not embezzle your Goods, nor betray the Trust you repose in them; they dare not do these things; there is a Conscience within that restrains them, an Eye above which awes them. You have two famous instances in Scripture for the proof of this, which I shall mention, the one of a great Man, the other of a poor Servant.

The former is that of good Nehemiah: What made him so excellent a Governor, and so tender over the people, studying their ease and comfort? He had precedents enough to justify him in another manner of Carriage toward them, Neh. 5.14, 15. For twelve years I and my brethren had not eaten the bread of the Governors. He made not use of that which was his just allowance; The former Governors which had been before me were chargeable to the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty pieces of silver, yea, even their Servants bare rule over the people; so that this Oppression was grown to be a custom; Why did not he keep it up? The people having been accustomed to such a load would not have kicked now, that was not it; he did not fear the people, but he feared God, who alone was more than they, and that was it that kept him from such practices, as he tells us in the same Verse, So did not I because of the fear of God.

The other instance is that of Joseph, who was indeed of a most Noble Descent, the best Family in all the World, but having fallen under the heavy displeasure of his envious Brethren they sold him; and at this time he was a poor Servant, nay, of the worst sort, a Slave, and what would not such an one do to recover his liberty, or to enlarge his comforts? His Mistress burnt in Love to him, and was earnestly set for an unlawful Enjoyment, and thereupon tempted him to a compliance with her Lust. Carnal Reason now might have suggested; here is a fair opportunity offered for advantaging yourself, a refusal will enrage her, if you do not yield to her Love you kindle her Wrath, and that will make the House too hot for you; but if you do comply with the motion, and accept her tendered kindness, you may be sure of a Friend, you engage her favor, and who knows but by having that you may recover your liberty; however you may promise yourself much from it; but this would not take, Joseph had been taught better in his Fathers House, and he had not forgot all, he had brought from home with him such a Principle as was his preservation from this fiery Dart, an excellent Antidote against this insinuating Poison, and that was a Spirit of ingenuous gratitude, and holy fear, Gen. 39.8, 9. My Master hath committed all that he hath to my hand, there is none greater in his house than I, neither hath he kept back anything from me, but thee, because thou wast his Wife, how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God! You see here the power of good Principles, and the blessed effect of Family Religion.

Whereas the neglect of this is of as malevolent influence, and pernicious consequence. An House where there is not holy instructions and exercises, is like a Field or Garden not cultivated that will be over-run with Weeds: When Masters of Families neglect their Duty to God, they set their Children and Servants a wretched Example, and teach them to neglect their Duty to them, by their not owning and honoring of God, they teach them to disesteem and

disrespect themselves; for it is but just, a righteous thing with God, that what measure they meet out should be meted out to them again; by their Irreligion they teach their Children and Servants Atheism, by their Looseness they teach them Profaneness, by their playing at Cards at home they teach them Gaming abroad, by which the Estates they labored for are brought to nothing, and their Children to a Morsel of Bread, if not to the Gallows at last. This is no more than what such Masters and Parents do deserve, no more than what they bring upon themselves, and no more than what God hath threatened, for he hath said, They that despise him shall be lightly esteemed; where observe, it is not said, God himself will lightly esteem them, though that is certain he will do so, for they shall not stand in his presence, he will put them away like dross, and say, cast them out of my sight; but he will likewise so order it, that they shall be lightly esteemed by others. God will expose them to the contempt of others, yea, to the contempt of their own Families, their own Relations, their own Children and Servants. Take an instance of this; Nabal was a very rich Man, and very great, but a very bad walker, and of an ugly temper, and though all feared him none loved him, he was a burden to his own House, what did one of his Men think of him, and say too behind his back, 1 Sam. 25.17. He is such a son of Belial that a man cannot speak to him; yea, and Abigail his prudent Wife, though she would have covered his shame, yet she could not, no, nor give him a good word, verse. 25. Let not my Lord regard the men of Belial, for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. He both is a Fool, and acts like one.

Whereas your setting and keeping up the Worship of God in your Families, your Exemplary and Gospel-conversation your close and humble walking with God will put a singular beauty and luster upon you, and make your Faces shine in the Eyes of others, and commend you to their Consciences; so that they who are under your

Government, and do understand themselves, will freely submit to your conduct and order, obeying not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake; such thoughts as these will at sometimes be making their way into their minds, and repeating themselves. It was the great goodness of God, and tender love of our Parents, that cast our Lines in such a Family, where our Master is a good Man, and our Mistress a gracious Woman, both of them Persons fearing God, they seek our good, taking care not only for our Bodies, providing Food for them when well, and Physic when sick, and teaching us the Mystery of our Calling; but they look after the welfare of our Souls too, that we may be holy here, and happy hereafter, know and serve God in time, and enjoy him to Eternity; how much are we obliged by this to take care of their business, to lay ourselves out in their Service, and be good in our Places, and study to please them well in all things; if they have in them any spark of ingenuity, if any sense of kindness, if any love to themselves they cannot but now and then, yea, frequently have such workings in their Minds.

Object. But here some may be ready to step in and say, Doth not experience prove the contrary, have not others, nay, have not you yourself seen it otherwise? Rebellious Children, and unfaithful wicked Servants in those Houses where there is constant praying and reading, and other Religious Exercises. To this I answer,

First, By granting it is so, too too often so, it is most certain, and no less sad than certain, and worthy to be matter of great Lamentation, that there are some very bad Persons to be found in very good Families. There was a Bloody Cain in Adam 's Family, whom his immediate Parents loss and ruin could not make wise; and an unnatural Ham in Noah 's, whom a Deluge of Waters could not wash from his filthiness; a scoffing Ishmael in Abraham 's, notwithstanding all the care and pains he took in teaching and

commanding his Children; there was Judas a Traitor, an Incarnate Devil in the Family of Christ himself, who spake and lived as never Man did. A Weed may be found in the choicest Garden, a Serpent was in Paradise, which may become relief to those gracious Parents that have degenerate, and graceless Children. Pity them, bemoan them, weep over them, do your utmost to reclaim them, and to turn them to the wisdom of the Just; but consider, this is not your case alone; David was a Man after God's own Heart, yet what a dismal company of Children had he? Of whom I do not remember one good, except Solomon, who notwithstanding all his wisdom was none of the best: But,

Secondly, This I may lay down, as I believe, without fear of a contradiction, that for the greater part, those Families which the Rulers of them are careful to make Bethel 's houses of God thorough practices of Piety, and actions of Religious Worship, are the Seminaries of Virtue and true Religion. These are the Gardens in which Christ hath his precious Plants; these the little enclosures where he reaps his richest Crops; I do not indeed deny, but as the Wind bloweth where it listeth, so doth the Divine Spirit, who is a most free Agent, and chooseth what Objects he pleaseth to work upon. Lepers in Israel may have their loathsome Disease continuing upon them when Naaman a Syrian shall meet with a Cure. There was in the House of wicked Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, a good Abijah, in whom there was some good thing found toward the Lord God of Israel. God had his Saints in the House of a Monster, Bloody Nero; but it was to an Abraham that he promised he would be a God, and to his Seed. It is in such Houses there is found the Seed to serve him, which shall be accounted to him for a Generation. It is these that travel in birth for their Children and Servants, that they might be brought forth to God, and have Christ formed in their Hearts, and unto these God grants the seeing of the travel of their Souls to their



satisfaction. That precious Seed which they sow in holy Discourses, prudent and pious Counsels, and Religious Examples, God is pleased to water with his Blessing, so that it shall root, and spring up, and bring forth fruit. But,

Thirdly; Let us cast our Eye again upon, and take another view of that Scripture which we have already made use of, Gen. 18.19, where you have God speaking thus, I know Abraham that he will command his Children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. Observe the phrases or words as they lie in our Translation; he will command, and they shall keep: I must acknowledge myself to be singular and alone in the Notion, having consulted some Learned Expositors upon the place, and found none that take any notice of it; but, as those that repair to them know that is no strange nor unusual case, therefore I will with humble modesty communicate my thoughts to you, and submit them to the judgment of such as are able; I look upon these latter words not only as Predictory, foretelling what the Event would be, what his command would produce, and how it would work, but also Promissory, and so securing that good and desirable issue. Abraham will teach his Children, and his Household after him, and saith God, they shall keep the way of the Lord, since Abraham will do his Duty, I will succeed and prosper him in the doing of it; he shall not lose his labor, nor take pains to no purpose. The truth is, God will not suffer his faithful Servants to be totally disappointed, and lie down in their shame at last; let things issue how they will they shall not lose their reward; in their Duty they shall have peace, their endeavors shall be accepted, and themselves shall be admitted into their Masters joy. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength, Isa. 49.5, but very often God gives them to see the desires of their hearts, so that they attain the end which they propounded to themselves, as here, since

Abraham will see to it that his Children and his Household be taught, God would see to it, that they should learn and practice what they were taught. He would set up the worship of God in his Family, and maintain it there as long as he lived; and God would so influence and order their Spirits, that they should keep it up after him, they should love and honor and serve God after his example, and after he was dead and gone, godliness should be posteritized in his Family.

V. This one thing is the Highway to a Blessing, to have the favor of God, together with the pleasant fruits of that favor, do but you in the sincerity of your hearts, and from a gracious Principle perform your Family duties, and set up the worship of God there, and you may comfortably expect that God in his great goodness and mercy will pour down his blessing upon your Families, and make your Family a blessing unto you.

First, The Blessing of God shall be upon your Family, it shall be upon you who are the Parents, and Masters, and upon yours as well as you, like that precious Ointment, which being poured out upon the head of Aaron, from thence descended to the Skirts of his Garment; there is a notable place to this purpose, a place which hath a double aspect, a terrible frowning one upon the wicked, but a smiling and comfortable one to the godly, Prov. 3.33. The Curse of the Lord is in the House of the Wicked, but he blesseth the Habitation of the Just. Let us well consider this Scripture, The Curse of the Lord is in the House of the Wicked; he doth not say the Curse is impendent, and hangs over it, nor that it is at the door, ready to draw the latch, but it is already in, it hath made its entry, and taken possession: and as it is in it, it spreads and goes all over it, it goes into every room, and mingles itself with everything there, it lights and abides upon the man, and upon all that he hath; if you go into the Mans House, you may possibly see what will dazzle your eyes, there is costly Furniture,

Rich Hangings, Great Cupboard-Heads of Plate, Garments of Silk, Satin, and Velvet wrought with Gold, Tables spread with variety of the greatest Dainties, as the Psalmist saith, Psal. 73. They have more than heart can wish, but there is no fear of God there, instead of that, there is a great deal of debauchery, and profaneness, ranting, roaring, gaming, healthing, cursing, swearing, obscene filthy talk, and as foul actions; Hell itself is broke out, there is the smoke, the fumes of that bottomless pit, and there is the curse of God too; that Flying-Roul mentioned Ezek. 5.2, the length whereof is twenty Cubits, and the breadth thereof ten, and saith that Text, it shall enter into the house, and remain there, it takes up its abode, and it is not idle and unactive, works indeed gradually, and oftentimes insensibly, nobody perceives it, but it works effectually, it shall consume the House with the Timber and Stones thereof; it hath strong and sharp teeth, that can bite stones in pieces, Psal. 37.35, 36. I have seen the Wicked in great power, spreading himself like a green Bay-Tree, yet he passed away, and loe! He was not. Yea, I sought him, but loe! He could not be found.

But let us go to the other part of the Text, and see what report that makes us, He blesseth the Habitation of the Righteous. Observe now, there is righteousness in the habitation, a good man dwells there, and out of the good Treasure of his heart he brings forth good things, there hath been a gracious Principle Divinely inspired into him, and it is his desire and endeavor to act suitably to that Principle; in his House you may see not only sobriety, but also righteousness towards Man; and yet more than so, there is godliness, a making conscience of performing all that duty which they owe to God; now as there is righteousness, there is a blessing there too, God hath blessed that man, and his house, in turning them from their iniquities, in giving them such a Spirit, and that blessing doth abide, it shall never be revoked, nor reversed. God will say in this case, as Isaac did with

respect to Jacob, Gen. 27.33. I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed; and that is not all neither, the Text saith, He blesseth his habitation; he hath not only done it, but he goeth on still to do it, the old blessing remains firm and valid, and God is pleased to add new ones to it, and will continue doing so, till he at last be what Moses said of Naphtali, Deut. 33.23, satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the Lord, what may we not say of such an House, Godliness is there, and God himself will be there too, for he is nigh unto all that call upon him, that call upon him in truth. He looks upon others afar off, and keeps his distance, but he is near these, he stands at their right hand, he dwells in them, and with them in their heart and house, and where ever he dwells, the house is the better for him, he always brings enough with him to make him welcome. He saith peace be to this house, and mercy be to this house, yea, and salvation be to this house; he will quiet this house when there is a storm, and comfort it when there is trouble, and uphold it when it is sinking, and repair it when under decays, and shine upon it, and prosper it. Seeing it is a Religious house, God will make it a comfortable house, seeing the incense of Prayer goeth up from the house to Heaven; a shower of blessing shall come down from Heaven upon the house, a variety of duties shall be accompanied with a variety of mercies, and a succession of duties crowned with a succession of blessings; as day unto day shows mindfulness and night unto night gratitude, so day unto day on God's part, shall show his love, and night unto night his faithfulness. Not but that in those very Families where there are most holy exercises, there may be many afflictive exercises. David's house was not as the clear Sunshine, or a Morning without Clouds; there are among his dearest Children Iniquities and Transgressions; and notwithstanding the everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, into which God hath entered with them; he hath reserved to himself the liberty of visiting those iniquities with the Rod, and those Transgressions with

Stripes, yet this doth not hinder their blessedness. Though afflictions may and do come in, yet they cannot crowd or shut the blessing out. Jacob met with a great deal of trouble, nevertheless the blessing remained upon him. Nay, God will take such special care of his People, as that the very Rod shall blossom with Love, and their afflictions shall be turned into advantages, out of the Eater shall come Meat; that which devours their comforts, shall feed their graces, the gains shall make a full, yea abundant amends for the loss; and whatever their apprehensions for the present may be, while they smart and are in pain, yet the day shall come wherein they shall be reconciled to the darkest and most severe dispensations. when they shall see, yea and feel cause with thankfulness to own that God's smiting's were a kindness, and that his rebukes were an excellent Oil, that instead of breaking the head, did better the heart.

Secondly, This is the way to have the Covenant made good to you, and an accomplishment of the Promises, which are more worth than all the gold of Ophir, or the riches of both the Indies. To this purpose that calls for our consideration, which God spake concerning Abraham in that place, to which we have twice already had occasion to have our recourse, Gen. 18.19 I know him that he will command his Children and his Servants after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; and if he and they do so, they will do well, but what then? What will he get by it? Read the very next words, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him; if Abraham would be careful of his duty, God would magnify his mercy upon him. Obedience to Precepts is followed with the performance of promises: but what was it that God had spoken of him? It was good, much, considerable, very great and admirable things which God had spoken. That he would make of him a great Nation, that he would make his name great, that he would bless him, and make him a blessing; that he would bless them that

blessed him, and curse them that cursed him, and that in him all the Families of the Earth should be blessed, Gen. 12.2, 3, in thee, i.e. in thy Seed, in Christ who shall come of that according to the flesh, shall all be blessed, for Christ came to bless them in turning them from their iniquities, in making peace for them with God, and bringing them back to God. Now, saith God, Abraham in this way will make all these my promises sure to him, he will prevent any obstacles and rubs from being in their way, Abraham will be dear over my interest, and name, and glory, he will exalt and honor me in his family, he will breed and train them up for me, he will use his Authority for me, and lay his command upon them to fear me, and to keep my way, and therefore I will be as good as my word to him, of all that which I have spoken concerning him, not one tittle shall fail. I beseech you take notice and remember it, that a care to promote the interest and honor of God, the setting up the service and worship of God in your Families, is the way to bring over to you the good of the Promises. The Apostle Peter tells us that the Promises are exceeding great and precious, so great that we cannot measure them, we cannot grasp them in our understandings; they are so great, that they contain Heaven and Earth in them, and all good things, and they are so precious, that you cannot rate them according to their worth; we may easily overvalue ourselves, and the enjoyments here below, that is done every day, but we cannot over-value promises; and would you not, my dear Friends, be heartily glad of an interest in them, and being able to lay a just claim to them, would you not be glad to go to the whole heap of promises, and with the arms of faith sweep them up, and say these are all mine own, these are the good things my God hath given me, these are those pleasant places in which my lines are fallen? In a word, would you not be glad at heart if all these exceeding great and precious promises should empty themselves and unlade all their treasures into your bosoms? I doubt not but you would, am sure you have reason, and if you would, your best and

only way is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to serve and honor God in your personal and domestic Capacities, and then,

Thirdly; As this is the way to bring down a blessing from God upon you and upon your Families, so it is the way to make your Families a blessing to you, and your Children a blessing to you. Oh, how sweet and desirable a thing is this! What a comfort is it to Parents to have such Children as are their Comforts, their Joy and Crown? Such Children as are blest themselves, and blessings unto them, when so many are their poor Parents grief and sorrow, their curse and shame, of whom them cannot think without a sigh, on whom they cannot look without indignation? Children, who fill their Parents lives with bitterness, and make them a lamentation throughout, and at last bring down their gray Hairs with sorrow to the Grave? Children, that while young, were their Parents hope and joy, but when they were grown up, became first the Companions of Fools, and then foolish themselves, and so prove Thorns in the sides of their Parents, and Pricks in their Eyes. I know, you that are Parents would not have your Children such; it is your duty to love them, and unless you have cast off all good nature, you do love them, and would rejoice in them and over them to do them good. Now this is one special way for the bringing it to pass; Prov. 20.3. The just man walketh his integrity; his Children are blessed after him. Here is a good Man, and he chooseth to walk in a good way. Dr. Jermin in his Paraphrastical Meditations upon the place hath these words; There are several Walks of Men in this World, one walketh in his pleasure as it were in the walks of a Garden, another walketh in his profit, and he walketh as it were up and down the Exchange, another walketh in his trouble, and he walketh as it were in a Wood; another walketh in his poverty, and he walketh as it were in a Desert; another walketh in his beastly lusts of drunkenness and uncleanness, and he delighteth to walk as it were in mire and dirt; but the just man walketh in his integrity, and he

walketh as it were in the holy Temple, but that his walk is to walk still on, and not to turn back till he come to the end of his Life. Much care is taken and many means are used that men may leave their Children in a happy condition, but he that walketh in his integrity takes the most proper, compendious and effectual course to bring himself to blessedness, and his Posterity too; so saith the wisest of men in this Text; His Children are blessed after him. Supposing that they tread in his steps, and walk in their integrity, as he had done in his before them. And Children blessed of God are their Parents blessings, and will be the joy of their hearts, and the staff of their Age; yea and Servants may be blessings also to the Families in which they live; and therefore are not to be slighted, nor oppressed, nor abused. You read in the word of Truth, that the house of Laban was blessed for the sake of Jacob, and the Master how bad and unjust soever he had been in other things, was ingenuous in acknowledging he had by experience found it so. And the like is recorded of the House of Potiphar; Gen. 39.5. It came to pass, from the time that he had made him Overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptians house for Joseph' s sake, and the Lord's blessing was upon all that he had both in the house and in the field. Now teaching them the knowledge and fear of God by your instructions, and alluring them to the practice of Godliness by your Religious Examples, together with prayer, is the way to make yours such.

VI. To set up the Worship and Service of God in your Families, is an excellent way to get and maintain peace in your own bosoms while you live; and how sweet that is those do very well know, and being consulted, will tell you, who have felt the Lashes of an enraged Conscience, and a Worm within gnawing and tearing them day and night. What would not such poor Creatures give? What would they not do to be delivered from the frights it puts them in, and the pain it



causeth? And I must needs say, it is in my account just matter of wonder how anybody can, and that any one of those do enjoy themselves a day, an hour, who live in the constant and shameful neglect of God their Maker, and of their duty this way. Methinks there should be always Nemesis à tergo, a dreadful sound in their Ears, they should be ashamed and blush to think of God, or lift up their faces toward Heaven, ashamed to look Man in the face, since they have so far put off Man, as to neglect the great Work of Man; ashamed to show their heads in their own houses, where they live like so many brutes, contrary to the dictates of Nature, and where the very stones and timber may be swift and loud witness against them. Methinks they should never see Wife, nor Child, nor Servant, without such bitter reflections as these, these poor creatures have a love for me, but they have a cause to hate me: now they show me respect, but the day will come when they will curse me, for they are like to be undone by me. I bring them up in Ignorance, Irreligion, and Atheism, I live without God in the World, and so do they, through my means they are not like to come at last to Heaven, because they do not walk in the way that leads thither, and it is my fault, who do not teach them that way, nor go before them in it. I am a bloody Husband to my Wife, an unnatural Father to my Children, a cruel Master to my Servants; when their Parents bound them to me, they did little think what a wretch I am, I do not take any care of their precious and immortal Souls; and indeed, how can it be thought that they should be kind and compassionate towards the Souls of others, who are cruel to their own; it is not likely Charity should be active abroad, when it doth not begin at home.

Methinks such Persons as these should every day feel a tormenting sting within them, and go up and down in pain, and that their Consciences should be very uneasy, and often in a day reproaching them, and flinging dirt in their faces, yea flashing Hell Fire in them. I

do not wonder that many of these Men do not care to be alone, not much at home but love to be abroad with their boon Companions as bad as themselves, among whom they may lay their Trouble with their Liquor; but they will get but little by this, this is but casting Conscience into a sleep for a time, that will awake again and rouse and roar; when they come to themselves Conscience will return to its work, and strike up again. Is this thy Love to her that lies in thy bosom? Dost thou dwell with her as a Man of knowledge, or an Heir of the Grace of Life? Are these thy bowels to thy Children which came out of thy Loins? Hast thou a mind to bring them up for the destroyer, and to be fuel for everlasting burnings? And is this thy mercy to thy Servants? Didst thou take them to corrupt them? If they had any good thing in them toward the Lord God of Hosts, wouldst thou utterly quench it? And if they were bad, thou takest a course to make them seven times more the Children of the Devil than before. Thou wouldest have them, O Man! Please thee, and wilt thou not show them how they may walk so as to please God? Thou wouldest have them to mind thy Shop, and wilt not thou mind their Souls? Thou wouldst have them take pains in thy House, but thou wilt take none for their Welfare and Salvation. It is far better to be such persons Horses and Dogs, than to be their Children and Servants, for then they would be better looked after. And this I doubt not but I may safely affirm, if such Men as these have any peace in such a way as this, they are either grossly ignorant, and know not the Judgment of the Lord, nothing of Religion to purpose; or they are very Atheists, such in Judgment as well as in Practice, or their Consciences are feared as with a hot Iron, or wholly benumbed, are cast into a profound sleep, and have no fear of God before their Eyes. And let them know, that sooner or later, the present Calm will be followed with a most terrible Storm; the Wrath of God, and the Rage of Conscience will cause it, and that will blow away all your comforts,

and throw down all your hopes, and who can tell but it may carry you to Hell with the People that forget God?

But on the other side, a hearty Love to the Name, Honor and Interest of God, and the setting up of his Worship and Service in your Families, from such an excellent and holy Principle is the direct and ready way to a sweet inward peace, the way to have a Calm, and Serenity in your Souls, though the Clouds may be black, and the Storms great which are upon your Tabernacles. Let things issue how they will in your Families, as to your Children and Servants, whether they do get good or no, whether they go to Heaven or to Hell; yet this will be a quieting and comforting consideration to you, that you in some good measure have done your duty. I have been much taken with those words of Samuel to Israel, after they had rejected the Lord from being King over them, and he had made Saul King; 1 Sam. 12.23. As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. O! Do you so, my dear Friends, let it be the same with you; set this excellent Copy before you, and write after it, frequently considering with yourselves, what an hearty reviving Cordial it will be when you are able to say to your Families, Blessed be God, I have not ceased to pray for you, many a Petition I have put up, and many a Tear I have shed in my Closet, nor have I ceased to pray with you; yourselves are my Witnesses, how frequent and earnest a Suitor I have been to God on your behalf. I have been pleading and wrestling every day, morning and evening; and I have also been teaching you the good and the right way, that of Truth and Holiness, that of God's Commandments, the Scripture way which is good, because it is clean, and pure, and right; because it brings to Heaven and Happiness all those that travel and are undefiled in it: And yet further, it will make the Cordial much more strong, and prove a singular addition to your comfort, when you are able to say, I have not only shewn and taught

you that good and right way, but I have likewise taken you by the hand, and led you into it. You and I have had a communion in holy Duties. We have gone to the House God in company, and at home we have walked in the way of God in company. How cheerfully may you converse together, and go about the work and business of the day after you have in the morning offered up your Sacrifice unto God; and how may you at night part with one another in peace, and lie down to rest in your Beds, after you have desired the spreading of the Divine Wing over you, and committed yourselves to the protection of that God who is the Keeper of Israel, and doth neither slumber nor sleep. If there be not willful commission of known sins, nor a willful omission of other known duties, but a sincere desire and endeavor of approving yourselves to God in all holy Conversation, a due and constant care of performing Family-duties will afford you great peace, so that nothing need to offend you. And let me add this, that constancy in this work will be a sovereign Antidote against many of those things that cause convulsions, and broils, and disorders in too many houses. What passions are there in them, and how unruly and exorbitant, by which all is put into a flame? What discontents, what animosities, what quarrels and contentions, that people are so far from enjoying one another, that they cannot enjoy themselves? By means whereof the nearness of the Relation becomes a great aggravation of the affliction; but joint-fellowship in Family-duties and exercises of Religion, may very much help in this case, both to the purpose of preventing those feuds, if you do but consider that of the Apostle; 1 Tim. 2.8. I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. As you must pray in Faith, so in Love. You must not in wrath pray to him that is the God of Love. It will also help to the repairing of a breach, and healing of a wound, when there is one made; if you duly consider that of our Savior; Matth. 5.23, 24. If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there rememberest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave there

thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Reconciliation must go before supplication, if we would have audience with God. How can you think your Father should be pleased if you live at variance with his Children? Peter would have Love between Husband and Wife, that their prayers might not be hindered; 1 Pet. 3.7. They that quarrel together, will not be fit to pray together. Observe James his method laid down for general observance among Christians; Jam. 5.16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. Seek peace with one another by confession, and then peace with God by prayer.

But to return, this Family-serving of God will promote inward peace in them that are Governors; it cannot but be a comfort to you to think, that while other houses have been the sink of sin, yours have been the dwelling places of the most High. Others have been Bethavens, houses of vanity, yours have been Bethels, the houses of God; in others there hath been the serving of divers lusts, and fellowship with Devils, and the unfruitful works of darkness, but in yours there hath been the serving of God, and a fellowship kept up with the Father and with his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. In a word, while other houses have been the Synagogues of Satan, yours have been the Temples of the Living God, and the Churches of Christ. As we do find godly Religious Families dignified in the Scriptures, and honored with the illustrious name of Churches. Thus Paul, Rom. 16.3, bids them greet Priscilla and Aquila his helpers in Christ Jesus; and also verse 5, the Church that was in their house. And again in Col. 4.15. He ordered them to salute Nymphas, and the Church that was in his house; i.e., the Family which was Christian and Godly; and besides their joining together in Manual Labor and household business, did unite and join together in the Worship and Service of God. And I have read that in the last Century before this, the House of George

Prince of Anhalt, for the good Orders that were observed therein, was said to be Ecclesia, a Church for the Religion in it, Academia, a University for the Learning in it, as well as Curia, a Court, for the grandeur and state of it. And if you yourselves are of God, and have in you any real goodness, it will be your comfort to have such Families also. The Apostle John that beloved Disciple who lay in the bosom of our Lord, and there contracted a holy heat, in his Epistle to the Elect Lady, tells her, He rejoiced greatly when he found of her Children walking in the Truth. It must needs then be as great, if not a greater joy to you to see your own Children walking in the Truth. For you Fathers, to see the Children that you begat, and you Mothers, to see the Children that you brought forth, and that both of you brought up with so much care, and tenderness, and cost, walking with God, and going on Heaven-ward. The same blessed Apostle in his third Epistle which he sent to Gaius his Host, saith, I have no greater joy than to hear that my Children walk in Truth. By them he meant those that were his Spiritual Children, that he had begotten unto God by the Gospel. And it is indeed a very great comfort and joy to all the Faithful Ministers of Christ, to see that they have not run in vain, nor labored in vain; that the precious Seed which they have sown hath taken root in some of their Hearers hearts, so that they are turned to the Wisdom of the Just, and to the Faith of the Gospel, and brought over unto God, and then that there is not only an embracing of the Truth, but a walking in the Truth, a coming under the power of the Gospel, and a living up to the Rules of the Gospel; a sound Conversion at the first, and ever after a suitable Conversation; for in this Ministers have their great end, in this they have the Seal of their Ministry; these persons are now their hope, and they will be their Joy and Crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming; yea, for the present they are their Glory and Joy; 1 Thes. 2.19, 20. Now I say, if this doth afford so much joy to godly Ministers, to see their Spiritual Children walking in the Truth, that

they have no Joy in the World comparable to it; surely we may conclude, that the Joy of gracious and holy Parents must needs equal, if not exceed it, when they see their Families, their Servants, especially their own natural Children walking in the Truth of God, and in the Ways of God, and cheerfully engaging together with them in the Service of God, counting none of his Commands grievous, but his Yoke easy, and his Burden light.

VII. The setting up of the Worship of God in your Families, and a faithful performance of Religious Duties there, is the way to prepare you for a dying well; the way to die in peace, and with comfort, and with a holy confidence to resign up, and commit your Souls unto God as to a faithful Creator. He that hath walked with God in his integrity in this World, need not fear any evil, when the time is come for his walking in the Valley of the shadow of Death, for there God will be with him, and there his Rod and his Staff shall comfort him; Psal. 23.4.

First; You must die; I need not tell you that for your information, though you have need to hear of it often for the promoting of your preparation. Too many put far away the evil day, though it be at the very door, and live as if they were to live always; but the Scripture hath told us, It is appointed unto all men once to die; Heb. 9.27. This is God's Appointment, his Order and Decree which shall not be reversed; what God hath appointed, man cannot avoid. We must all die once, and it is our great concern and wisdom to make sure that we shall not die twice, that over us the second death shall have no power; that the first will, experience plainly proves. We see persons die, though at several Ages, and in various manners, yet one after another they drop into the Grave, which is the House for all the Living; and when our turn comes, we also must among the rest take up our abode there until the Morning of the Resurrection. Now since

we all must of necessity die, our business is to make as sure as we can of dying well. Many are for an easy death, but I would have you be for a happy death. It is indeed difficult and troublesome to crowd thorough a strait and narrow Gate, but it is no great matter though you be pinched, and pained, and greatly put to it for a while, so that you find it an entrance into the glorious Kingdom of your God and Savior. But then know,

Secondly; Those that neglect duty cannot rationally expect to die comfortably. How can they think to be admitted into the Joy of their Lord, who have been unfaithful in their little, and hid their Talents in a Napkin? They that have lived without God in the World, and in the neglect of him, it will be very hard and unpleasant to them to think of departure hence, and going into the oath World, where if they have not God welcoming, delighting and satisfying them, they shall meet with nothing but misery and torments; if they are not admitted into the bosom of his Love, they shall be thrown into the flames of his Wrath. How was it possible that the unprofitable Servant could look his Master in the face with any comfort? He had all along hard thoughts of him, and in the end no hope of any good from him. He had been indeed entrusted with a Talent, but though he had not embezzled and squandered it away, yet he buried it, it lay dead upon his hand, there was no improvement of it for his Masters Interest, and by that means he undid himself forever. The losing of his time was no less than the losing of his Soul. Everyone of you, my Friends, that is the Master or the Mistress of a Family, have a Talent committed to you by the great God, and for it you must be accountable; there is a day coming wherein your Lord will reckon with his Servants; what other Talents you have, of Knowledge, Gifts, Interest, Estate, and the like, you know best; but for certain you have a Talent of Power and Authority put into your hands, you had need be very careful how you manage it; let me ask you, what do you do



with your Talent? What do you do? Ask yourselves the question, if you do not serve your Generation according to the Will of God. If you do not Trade with your Talent for the honor and glory of God, you will be cast into outer darkness, where you shall have torment and sorrow enough; here you had business enough which you would not do, there you shall have misery enough from which you shall not escape; here you will not give glory to God in an holy activity for him, hereafter he will extort it from you in a way of Vindicative Justice; if you will not apply yourselves to praying and reading the holy Scriptures, with the teaching and instructing of your Children and Servants in the things of God, you may well tremble to think of fiery indignation, and of the dismal effects of it, weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth, which will be the portion of your Cup to all Eternity, unless you do seasonably repent, and reform, and make your peace with God, for what reason have they to promise themselves a comfortable Reward, who do now live in the neglect of their Duty. But then on the other side,

Thirdly; When your Hearts have been upright with God, and sound in his Statutes, and walked (as David resolved to do) within your Houses with a perfect Heart, and behaved yourselves wisely in a perfect way; then you need not tremble at the nearest approaches of the King of Terrors. It is indeed a solemn thing to die, and as it is a taking the compositum in pieces, as it is the parting of those two old Friends, the Soul and Body, which had lived together long in great intimacy, and close union, Nature startles at it, and they seldom are divided without an agony and struggling. But yet such a Person as I have now described need not fear, but as he can look back with comfort, so he may look forward with boldness, as Paul did, 2 Tim. 4.6, 7 8. I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. Well, Paul, thou art now ready to be gone, but what didst thou do while thou wast here? I have fought a good fight, I have

finished my course, I have kept the faith; and what dost thou now please thyself with? That henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge will give unto me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing; and who are they that can love his appearing as a Judge? Surely none but they that have been obedient to his commands, and done his work as he was their Lord and Master; when you have served your Generation according to his Will, you may be as willing to fall asleep as a weary Man is at Night after a hard days labor, when he hath finished his work; in short, when you have been faithful in your little, much more when you have been always abounding in the work of the Lord, you may be sure that your labor shall not be in vain, but you shall receive your reward, even that Gift of God which is Eternal Life. To this purpose I would have you consider two things.

First; The account our Lord and Savior could give of himself, and what thereupon he did expect and ask of his Father. Both these we meet with in John 17.4.5. The account which he could give of himself was this, Father, I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. He glorified his Father in and by finishing his work. Now let it be your care and mine to tread in the steps of our Lord, and to write after so excellent a Copy set us by so great a Person, and so dear a Savior; though we cannot equal him, that is a thing impossible for us poor weak sinful Creatures to do, yet let us imitate him as much and as far as we can, and the good Lord help us so to do; and if we will up and be doing God will be with us. Will you therefore endeavor it? Oh do, glorify God upon earth; you have too much dishonored him by your sins against him, by your disobedience to him, by your preferring worthless trifles, broken cisterns, lying vanities before him; mend now, and for the future make it your business to glorify him; you were made for that, it was the end of your Creation; you were sent hither into the World for

that, whatever other business your hand findeth here to do, this is the main and principal, this doth deserve and call for your best thoughts, and utmost diligence, and do you glorify him by finishing the work which he hath given you to do. There is none of you, but God hath given work; as he casts your Lines, and carves your Portions, so he hath cut out your work: I beseech you, study it, labor to know what it is; and knowing it, mind it, set about it speedily without delay, and follow it close, neglect no part of it, but finish it as far as you are able; you cannot do all, because so much of your time is already lost, and your strength is so much impaired, and corruptions do so greatly clog you, and your spiritual and carnal Enemies will so resist and hinder you that you cannot do all you should, and will need pardon for your miscarriages and failings in what you do; yet do all that you can, not only the work of your general Calling as you are Christians, but also the work of every particular place, station and relation in which the Divine Providence hath set you; whether it be Civil or Ecclesiastic, Public or Domestic. Art thou a Sheriff of Justice in the Country, a Mayor, Alderman, a Common-Council-Man or Constable in the City? Do thou the duty of thy Place. Art thou a Minister of the Gospel? Do thou thine. Preach the Word, be instant in Season and out of Season; art thou a Child, a Servant? Be thou obedient, industrious, faithful: art thou a Husband, a Wife, a Parent, a Master or Mistress, the Head and Governor of a Family? Do thou thine. Walk within thy House with a perfect Heart, rule in the fear of God. He that is not good in his Relation, is not good at all; he that is not a good Husband, a good Master, is not a good Man; much of the power of godliness doth consist and discover itself in the performance of Relative Duties, See then that much of your care be employed about this, and see that your places be not empty of Duty, nor your Families void of Religion.

Now observe what our Savior did hereupon expect and say, Father glorify thou me with thy own self: Here hath been my work, where now is my glory? So when you have finished the work which God gave you to do, when you have walked with God, and lived to God, when you have improved your Interest, your Power, and your All for God, then you may say, Father do thou accept of me, and receive me, and glorify thou me, my work is done, now let me have my rest, always remembering that you are not to expect this upon the score of Merit, but only as a Reward of Grace; for our Lord hath taught us to call ourselves unprofitable Servants, when we have done all that is commanded us; what are we then now we fall so short, and perfect not one piece of work that is put into our hands?

Secondly; Consider that good account which the Prophet gives of those good Men whom after a Life of Service God takes away from hence; would you know what becomes of them, whither it is that they go, into what state they are put? He tells you, Isa. 57.2. They enter into peace, they rest in their beds, everyone walking in his uprightness, i.e. everyone having walked in his uprightness while he was here; they professed Religion, and were true to that Profession; they owned the Interest of God, yea, and to their power they served that Interest; they have studied uprightness and integrity; they have been faithful to God in their Generation, and in their several places, and when such do come to die, they have no reason to be afraid of dying, no reason for them to draw back, and be unwilling to go; say to them it shall be well with them, they shall enter into peace, into a complete and perfect peace; they shall live in peace, and enjoy themselves in peace, they were here sometimes fear round about, but henceforth they shall be peace round about, and they shall rest in their Beds. Poor hearts! They had but a little rest while they were here, a great many fears, and a great deal of care, and but a little rest; alas! It was broken and disturbed by Enemies without, and by Sins

within; Head and Heart were discomposed and out of order, at sometimes there is no soundness in their flesh, nor rest in their bones, Psal. 38.3. But when once Death hath cast them into their last sleep, they shall have placidam quietem, a sweet and pleasant rest; their Bodies for a time, and but for a time, in a Bed of Dust, for that is not intended for the place of their abode, they only Inn there by the way, yet it is made easy for them, and safe, and perfumed, for it is the place where the Lord himself lay; but their precious and immortal Souls shall rest forever in a Bed of Spices, in a Bed of Love, in the Bosom of Abraham, in the Arms of Jesus, Rev. 14.13. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; not only the Martyrs that die for him, but all Believers that die in him, in the Faith of Christ, in obedience to him, in a state of Union to him, and Communion with him, for their works do follow them, all their works of Charity, and all their works of Piety, all the good they have done abroad in the World, and all the good they have done at home in their Families, none shall be forgotten, none dropped nor lost by the way, but all shall follow them, and in Heaven meet them in great, glorious and inconceivable Rewards, so that the Lord Jesus shall be both glorified in them, and admired by them.

VIII. You having made it your work and business to serve and worship God in and with your Families, and brought them cheerfully to join with you therein, you may leave them with the far greater hope, and by consequence with the greater comfort. And while they are mourning, and sighing, and weeping, because they must now part with you; yet you may be glad and rejoice, because hereafter you shall meet with them in a better place and state; and here again take into your Consideration these few things.

First; That all these things must be dissolved. You now see it is so as to many of these things, and believe it will be so as to all the rest.

Death doth travel up and down, and mows people down apace, and will pursue his bloody work till he had snapped asunder the nearest and dearest Relations, broken up all Houses, and put an end to Families. It would not by wise persons be counted incongruous at a Marriage-feast to have a Death's-head set upon the Board, nor to dash your sweetest Contentments and Delights with dying Thoughts; think, my Friend, often think that Husbands and Wives must part, the Conjugal Knot shall be loosed, Parents and Children must part, sooner or later, but how soon none of us do know; the great God, in whose Hand our Times are, that locked that up among his Treasures, and no Man hath a Key to let him into the knowledge of it; the certainty of the thing doth engage us to diligence, and our ignorance of the time is a strong Argument for our doubling of that diligence.

Secondly; That will be a very sad parting which will be in despair. As they must needs mourn bitterly who mourn without hope; so they must needs die dismally who die without hope; and what can be thought more likely than that such will be the death of those, who in the days of their Health and Prosperity have forgotten God, and lived without him in the World, who have made it their work to sin together, and to dishonor God together, and profane his Name and abuse his good Creatures together? If these believe there is a God, and a Resurrection, and a Judgment to come, in which all Persons shall receive according to what they have done in the Body, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, they may have such thoughts as these forcibly breaking in upon them. I and my Family, after we have lain a while and slept in the Dust, shall rise again, and we shall meet again, but where? Oh where shall we meet? We shall meet at the Judgment Seat of Christ, there to hear that Condemning Sentence pronounced upon us, Go ye cursed: we shall meet in Hell, where we must make our Eternal abode; we shall meet in Torments, which will be both intolerable and eternal, that so as we have sinned together,

we may smart together, and burn together in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and that which will render these thoughts more grievous and painful to them may be this; that their Children and Servants coming thither will be the aggravation of their own misery, since they were so much the cause of it, which as some think was the great, nay only reason why the rich Glutton, (of whom you read in Luke 16.) being in Hell was so unwilling that his Five Brethren should come into that place of Torments; it was not out of good nature, and love to them, for there is no such thing in Hell, it was not out of a desire to prevent their misery, but the aggravating of his won, he having contributed so much to their ruin and destruction by his vile and wicked Example. But then,

Thirdly; Those of you who can at a dying hour look upon your Relations as having walked with you in the ways of God, likely to follow you into a blessed Eternity, may leave them with joy. All of you that have made God your choice, and his glory your end, that have made Religion your principal business, and Family-duty your work, and been constant in the dispatch of it, you may part with comfort, and leave one another with joy; though there will be a shower, Bowels will yearn, and Love will melt the Heart, and make it drop Tears, yet there need be no storm within; you that are Parents may commit them to God, whom you brought up for him, and so rejoice in hope that though you leave them behind you, yet they will not leave that God to whom you are going; but though they stay behind in a wicked World, which is full of snares and dangers, bad Company, bad Examples and Temptations, yet since you have by Faith and Prayer committed them to him, they shall graciously be kept by his power, through Faith unto Salvation; and that the Counsels you have given have made an abiding impression upon them; and the Seed which you have sown shall not be lost, but spring up and bring forth fruit, and when you are dead and gone they will

continue and proceed to practice as they have been taught, and they will know, love, and fear the God of their Fathers, and serve him with a perfect Heart and a willing Mind; you may hope, that of all that which hath been by you said and done something will stick. The Heathen could say,

*Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem, Testa diu—*

A new Vessel will for a great while retain the scent or savor of that Liquor which was at first put into it; and so young ones: and I am apt to think that many of those who after a pious Education turn aside from the good ways of God to crooked paths with the workers of iniquity do not sin at so easy a rate as others do, but offer violence to their Consciences, and call to mind again that of God himself concerning Abraham and his House, which I have already quoted more than once; He will teach his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. His Instructions will infuse such Principles into them, that they will do it, and my Grace shall so powerfully co-operate with those Principles, and influence them that they shall do it. They shall keep the way of the Lord, the way of his holy Precepts, and the way of his instituted Worship; they shall do it after him, after his example, and after his decease, when he is dead and in his Grave; my fear and service shall be posteritized in his Family. Abraham's advice and practice shall live in their Minds, and Religion shall live in their Houses, and so it did in Isaac's, and in Jacob's, and so down. and further for the strengthening of this your hope, I desire you to take along with you that passage of Solomon, Prov. 22.6. Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. The Scripture sets it the next Door to an impossibility for them to learn to do well who have been accustomed to do evil; and though it be not so hard, yet it is not very easy for them to do evil who have been all along accustomed to



the doing of that which is good. Zophar speaking of the wicked Man, saith, Job 20.11. His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust; which Gregory expounds thus, *Usque ad pulverem non deserunt*; i.e. *usque ad mortem ab iniquitate non cessat*: He doth not forsake his Vices as long as he lives, he doth not cease from them till he dies, his youthful sins stick close, fast to him; he continues the practice of them while he lives, and when he dies he receives the punishment of them. It is a matter of greatest moment to take heed what we do accustom young ones to; teach Children that which is good at first, and they will learn it well, and that is the way to have them keep it well. It is reported of the Harts in Scythia, that they do betimes teach their young ones to leap from Turf to Turf, and from Bank to Bank, and from Rock to Rock, and so they continue it when they come to be old, and by means thereof they cannot be taken though they be hunted, whether that be so or not is none of my Enquiries; sure I am, teaching Children their Duty toward God, and going before them, and with them in the performance of it, is the way to engage them to a perseverance therein, and to secure them from the great Nimrod of Hell, that cruel and bloody Hunter of precious Souls: so that they shall not afterwards be drawn away from it by the wiles, subtleties and temptations of that wicked one, nor seduced by the bad examples of evil Men, who know not the Lord. Do you by your Teachings and Instructions lay up the words of God's Mouth in their Heads, so through Divine Grace they may come to lay them up in their Hearts, and then they will be preserved from sinning against God, and kept from the paths of the Destroyer. And as a happy consequence hereof,

You may at your departure from hence leave them with a comfortable hope of meeting them again with mutual and exceeding joy in the other World, in a better place, and in a far better case than that is in which you leave them; when all troubles shall be removed

from the Flesh, and all corruption from the Spirit, when there shall be nothing within to disturb, and nothing without to offend, but you and they shall have a spotless Purity, and blessed Eternity. You shall be raised out of your Graves in which you have had so sound and long a sleep, and stand upon the Earth, and be caught up together with the rest of the holy Ones into the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall you ever be with the Lord, and O the joys that will be at that meeting! The meeting of the Bridegroom with the Bride is not to be compared with it; the meeting of the Father with his penitent and returning Prodigal falls short of it; Oh the Smiles, the inward Satisfactions, the dear Embraces, the loud Triumphs, the Hosannahs and Hallelujahs that will be at that meeting! All which will arise from the condition you meet together in, freed from sin, and from imperfections, delivered from all your Enemies, having got the last of them Conquered, and now under your Feet; yourselves being in a state of safety, peace, and acceptance with God; and also it will arise from the thoughts and considerations of that which you then meet together for. It is for the greatest purposes, and most glorious ends that can be; you meet to receive the Reward of all your services, and of all your sufferings, the answer of all your Prayers, the accomplishment of all your desires, the fulfilling of all your hopes; you shall meet the Bridegroom, whom though you had not seen, yet believing you chose, and loved, and were espoused to, and between him and you there shall be everlasting Nuptials; you shall meet together to take possession of that incorruptible undefiled Inheritance which fadeth not away, but is reserved in Heaven, of which you were new-born the Heirs; you shall meet to see, and together enjoy that God in Heaven whom you served upon Earth, to Sun yourselves in his Beams, to solace yourselves in his Arms, to Delight yourselves in that fullness of Joy which is in his presence, and to bathe yourselves in that River, or rather Ocean of Pleasures which is at his Right Hand for evermore. You that have walked in the

same way shall come to the City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, of which the Lord and the Lamb are, will be the everlasting light; and having set your Hand to the work of God, and having had your Heart in it, you shall enter into the same rest. You that have mourned together, and together mingled your Groans and Tears, and poured out bitter Complaints against your Sins and your Selves, shall then rejoice together, and that with exceeding Joy, because of your own and each others thorough Cure, and perfect Health. You that have confessed your faults together, both Heart and Life-sins, shall then be delivered from them, and triumph over them all. You that have prayed together upon Earth, and with all the power of your Souls Besieged the Throne of Grace, shall in Heaven sing praises together, even Eternal Hallelujahs, and to make the Consort complete, and that melodious Harmony the more ravishing, you shall be joined with an innumerable Company of Angels, and all the Saints that were Redeemed unto God by the Blood of the Lamb.

Oh! How deliciously sweet will it be to your Souls who have been the Father of a gracious Family, or the Mother of it, if at the last and great day, when the whole World shall be summoned to appear, and give up their account to God, you shall be able to say, Lord here am I, and the Children which thou hast given me; these thou gavest to me in thy goodness, and these I gave up to thee in Covenant, and accordingly I brought them up for thee; I am not ashamed to own them for mine, and I trust that in Christ thou wilt be graciously pleased to call them thine, now thou art making up thy Jewels; these I did carefully teach thy fear, and did also lead them in the way that thou didst choose, and they were willing to learn, and ready to follow: they were my hope, when but little, and my comfort when grown up, and now, Lord, we present ourselves before thee in hope of being accepted by thee, and finding favor; and then our Lord Jesus shall look upon you with a gracious Eye, and say, I know you, you are

some of my old Friends and Acquaintance, you did rejoice and work Righteousness, and remembered me in my ways, and in those ways I did meet with you; Come ye blessed of my Father, you are welcome to me, and you will be so to him, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, you have been industrious seekers, and now you shall be successful and happy finders; you have been running the Race, now you shall receive the Prize; you have been sowing in Prayers, and Tears, and a Conscientious performance of Duty, and now you shall with joy reap the Harvest, your Faith shall be swallowed up of Vision, and your Hope of Fruition. This is no more, my dearly Beloved, than what you, and such as you may with good ground hope for, and live in the joyful expectation of, and the lively hope of it may very well allay the bitterness of Death, and afford you that comfort, which may through Christ keep your Souls in perfect peace, even when you are in the greatest agonies and struggling's with the King of Terrors. When you are ready to draw your latest Breath, and to bid farewell to all the world, and to set up your Sails for the other world, and to shoot the Gulf, your Conscience can bear you witness that you have heartily submitted yourselves to God, and believingly closed with the Lord Jesus Christ, renouncing all confidence in the Flesh, and making mention of his Righteousness as that only by which you must be justified; yet that you have not had an idle and unactive Faith, but endeavored to walk in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord blameless, and that you have been sincerely desirous to improve your interest and power for the honor of God, and accordingly have ordered and brought up your Family for him, and so have spent your time together in his fear and service: I say, you may hereupon cheerfully commit your own Souls to him as to a faithful Creator, and also your Children to him; them you may leave in his Hand as the proper Objects of his Covenant Love, and Fatherly Care, hoping that you shall meet again in his Blessed Presence, and live forever in his Kingdom and Glory. You see

I have brought from yourselves, you that are Masters, Mistresses, Parents, Heads and Governors of Families, Eight Arguments for your setting and keeping up in them the Worship of God, and Religious Exercises, and upon every one of them I have insisted long, and enlarged much; that if it be possible I might convince your Judgments, and work upon your hearts and affections. Now the question is, what you think of, and say to these things. For mine own part, though I do not, and hope never shall overvalue any of my own labors, yet I would set a great estimate and high price upon all the truths, of which I am sure these things which I have brought to you are some, how much soever they may taste of the Earthen Vessel in which they come to you, yet know assuredly they are of God. And let me add, it is a common Saying and a true one, that Interest governs the World; though it is no less common and true, that men are greatly mistaken about their real and grand interest, placing it where it is not. But I say, if your own interest have any place and power with you, if you would secure and promote it, you will find not only good but abundant reason for the doing of that which I am pressing upon you. viz. Setting up the Worship of God in your Families.

And if any of you have hitherto been strangers to it, I earnestly beseech you to show yourselves persons of teachable and tractable Spirits, easy to be entreated, and evidently to manifest your fear of God, and love to yourselves, by your speedy doing it; take not up with some inclinations towards it, or good purposes or resolutions for the future, but up and be doing, fall presently to practice for God's sake, and for your own sake, and for your Families sake do not defer and put off, do not say you will do it afterward, for though that should stop the mouth of a sleeping lazy Conscience, it will by no means please an holy God. Besides, that is no other than a wretched fallacy, and base cheat, that a malicious Devil and a treacherous deceitful heart would put upon you; that Old Saying carrieth a great truth in it.

Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

He that is not fit and willing today, will be more unfit and unwilling tomorrow; Convictions will wear off, and the heart will grow harder, and corruption stronger, and the Devil will clap the faster hold, and the Spirit of God may withdraw and move no farther; strive no more, and where are you then? Thou saidst, seek ye my face, and my heart answered, thy face Lord will I seek. So David, here was a sudden compliance, he did not stand arguing and questioning, he did not take time, but immediately arose and girded himself to the work. O! That it may be so with you, strike Man, Woman, strike while the iron is hot, as soon as the wind blows spread your Sails. I beg of you, yea, with utmost importunity I beg, that you would go home today and do it, do not dare to lie down in your Beds this night without the performance of Family-duty, considering that it is Duty which I am calling you to, it is not a thing indifferent. I do not think it worth my while to contend for matters of that nature, but this is none of them, this is not a point of liberty, no, no, it is Duty, and Duty must be done, Duty is Debt, you owe it to God, to your Families, and Debts must be paid, otherwise Divine Justice will Arrest you, and you shall answer for it. Now, seeing it must be done, the sooner it is done the better, you do not know how soon you may die, it may be too night, and I am sure it is best and safest for you, that whenever Death comes, it should find Faith in you, and you in the way of your Duty. Blessed, forever blessed is that Servant, whom when his Lord cometh he shall find so doing.

### III.

#### Third Arguments for the setting up of Family-worship and Duty

But I shall now proceed (as indeed it is high time) to a third head of Arguments, drawn from your Children, who are near, and ought to be dear to you, unto whom you were in the hand of God Instruments of conveying life and being. Children that are parts of yourselves, that are yourselves in a second Edition, whose welfare therefore and happiness you are by all imaginable bonds obliged while you live to study, and promote even as your own. They likewise will in part be drawn from your Servants, particularly your Apprentices, who are under your roof, and committed to your care, and employed for some time in your service, and about your work. And here I desire you seriously to ponder upon these following Particulars, and to lay them close unto your hearts, and wisely judge what there is of strength in them, what a rational enforcement of this holy practice upon you.

1. Think with yourselves what they are by Nature, both your Children, and your Servants, more particularly your Children, because the nearness of the Relation doth strengthen the engagement upon you. And here we will consider them both as to their Bodies, and their Souls, and that in three Particulars. We will begin with their Bodies, and outward Man, which are indeed but dust, but the Workmanship of God's hands wonderfully made. now

First, Some of them peradventure are objects of pity in the eyes of all that behold them, some are defective and imperfect, an integrating part is missing, others of them are crooked, or their Members are misplaced, or very much deformed; so that Spectators turn away their faces from them, as from loathsome and odious Creatures, not

fit to be exposed to the sight of any; others of them are lame in their hands, or feet, one or both, or blind; others of them came excellent out of the hands of God, and the wombs of their Mothers, but since a disease hath seized them, as the Small Pox, or the Scrofulous Humor, which have made sad work in them, and utterly defaced their Beauty, digging pits and making seams in their faces, distorting their mouths, eating off a finger from this hand, and another from that, and so devouring them by piece-meal. Now let me ask you, is not this enough to draw out your compassions toward them, and to cause the sounding of your Bowels; could you be content that there should be no sound part in them, but all throughout nothing but botches and boils, and putrefying Sores; would you have their Souls as bad as their Bodies? would you be content that they should have ignorant blind Souls, crooked and perverse Souls, ugly filthy and deformed Souls; that as nice and curious Persons cannot abide to look upon them; so the great and holy God should not endure to look upon them neither, but say, cast them out of my sight, my mind cannot be towards them. Methinks you should bestir yourselves to the utmost, and do all that in you lies, that the loveliness of their Souls may compensate and make an abundant amends for the deformity of their Bodies; look out for the best Beauty for them, that Wisdom, and Grace, and Holiness may make even their faces to shine; yea, that their beauty may be perfect, through Christ's comeliness put upon them. But

Secondly, There be some of your Children which are amiable and pleasant to behold, curious pieces of God's Work: Sons that are Plants of Renown, and Daughters as Corner-Stones polished, after the similitude of a Palace, as you read in Psal. 144.12. They have bodies of a comely stature and exact shape, Limbs of a due proportion. Countenances lovely and lively, in which you see excellent Features and admirable Complexion; the Lily and the Rose



having met, and concurred to render them accepted and desirable in the eyes of men, and certainly this is a great Mercy, for which you and they have cause to bless God, only let them have a care they do not abuse it to Pride and Wantonness. Besides this fair outside, this well-built Tabernacle of Clay, they are inwardly adorned with good Tempers, smart, brisk and exquisite Parts, which greatly accomplish them and render them fit for Converse, so that all who know them are delighted with their Conversation.

And now sit down, yet Parents, sit down and consider, is it not a thousand pities that such Tabernacles should stand empty, or be possessed with an evil Spirit? Is it not pity such Bodies should have in them wicked and vile Souls; that those lovely persons, who have so much without to commend them to Men, should have nothing within to commend them to God? Would it not be sad, if these Persons, who have almost Angelical Countenances, should be no other than Cages of unclean Lusts, Sinks of Sin, Habitations of Devils, mere painted Sepulchers, fair to the eyes, but within there is nothing but filth, rottenness and a stink? Oh, how much better is it for them to resemble and take pattern by the King's Daughter, mentioned Psal. 45.13, who hath not only her garments of wrought gold, but is likewise all glorious within. This is the way for them to become precious in God's sight, and honorable; this is the way for Jesus the Lord of Glory and King of Saints greatly to desire their Beauty, though he himself is the chiefest of ten thousands, and deserves to be the Desire of all Nations. And then,

Thirdly, let your Children be what they will as to the outward man, fair or black, complete or defective, beautiful or deformed, what are they as to their Souls? The very best part about them is stark naught, indeed it is the very worst; that which David called his Glory, and should be theirs, is their Shame; alas there is cause enough why it

should be so. Be they as lovely as you think them, they are not Paradises, but Deserts and Wildernesses over-run with Briars, Thorns, and Weeds, not Cedars but Brambles; by nature they are Crabstocks, and is it not pity but they should be grafted upon with holy Instructions, and religious Principles? That so, instead of wild grapes, the grapes of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah, they may become Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that by them he might be glorified, which will also turn to their own singular Advantage; for having their Fruit unto Holiness, the end will be everlasting Life; for such Trees when their bearing time is come to its appointed Period, will be sound not Fuel for the Burning, but Timber for the Building; or, if you please, Death shall take them, and Grace transplant them into the Paradise of God.

You that are Parents and have beautiful Children, look upon them with a great deal of Pleasure; you look and like, you look and doat, you see yourselves in them, and several curious strokes and pretty tricks, and all these please you highly. But I remember when Samuel was greatly taken with Elijah, 2 Sam. 16.7, the Lord said unto him, Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him. So say I; do not look upon this or that natural or acquired Excellency in your Children so as to rest satisfied with that; but see if you can discover anything of Christ in them, anything of a new and divine Nature; as for their natural state you will see in them more of the brute than of the man, if you do but look upon them through a Scripture-glass; that will help you to the best prospect. To this purpose let us make use of that which we find in Job 11.12. Vain man would be wise, though man be born like the wild asses colt. In which words there are three things worthy of our observing; what Man is, what he would be, and what he was born.

First, what man is; vain, proud man, conceited man, but still vain man. In the Hebrew it is empty man. Indeed sometimes he makes a great noise, but there is little worth: He hath nothing in him, nothing of value, much froth, much wind, but no substance; he hath too much of that which he should not have, Sin, Satan, Folly, Madness, Madness is in the heart of man whilst he lives, but there is nothing of that which he should have, nothing of that beautiful Image which was at first stamped upon him, nothing of that primitive Glory with which he did at the first shine, nothing of that real Excellency and Beauty which our gracious and blessed Redeemer came to advance him to; he hath nothing of the saving Knowledge of God, but his foolish Heart is darkened, and he become vain in his Imaginations: nothing of the divine Spirit, but sensual, not having the Spirit, sunk into the Flesh, immersed, drowned in Flesh, nothing of sanctifying Grace, nothing is made new, but all old and rotten, wholly alienated from the Life of God, dead in Trespasses and Sins; there is in him no Love to God, no Faith in Jesus Christ, but altogether throughout filthy and abominable. Again,

Secondly, there we see what Man would be, wise. Vain Man would be wise; but, perhaps, you will say, this is well, it is very good, it is a sign he is not altogether empty. Here is a Will that stands right, Desires directed to a proper and deserving object. But mark what is the meaning of the Words, take it in these two things: He would be wise, i.e., he affects a show and appearance of Wisdom, and if he can attain that, he concludes he hath enough. He doth not care so much for being wise, as for being counted wise; he is wise in his own conceit, and in his own eyes, and he would be so in the opinion of all that know him. It is evident he does not care for Wisdom itself, because he doth neither pray, nor take pains, for it; he doth not dig for it as for Silver, nor doth he seek and search for it as for hid Treasures. But

whatever he now would be, or be thought to be, what was he at first, what when he came into the World? Zophar tells us,

Thirdly, He is born as a wild asses colt. What a strange Climax or Gradation is here? He is born a Colt, that is, at best, a Brute, be it never so handsome or well made, yet is no other than a Beast, and hath not the Understanding of a Man; but that is not all, he is born an Asses colt, a dull, heavy and foolish Creature, good, fit, for nothing; nor is that all, he is born a wild Asses colt, the dullest and most intractable Creature; so of all Fools, Man is the worst and most sottish. Thus the Scripture speaks, Isai. 1. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his masters crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. And again, Jer. 7. The Stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed season; and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the times of their coming, but my people know not the Judgment of the Lord. Now then I will leave it to you, O Parents, to Judge, whether you have not need betimes to break these Colts, if you would have them come to good; have you not need to take a great deal of pains with these Asses, and the taming of these wild Asses. Is there not reason why you should do what you can to bring them to bear the yoke in their Youth, and to draw in it. I mean not only your yoke, but Christ's too, which is easy, and none of his Commandments grievous; and so to turn these Beasts into Men, yea, into Saints; certainly you should, because they are yours, and if you love them you will; natural affection accompanied with religious Principles, will put you upon all diligent use of means to so blessed a purpose, viz. Bringing them out constantly to the public Ordinances, and at home taking care to pray for them, and with them, and to instruct, command, exhort and catechize them, together with the setting before them holy and good examples.

II. Add this Consideration to the former, How much you have contributed to their corruption and defilement, they are indeed degenerate Plants, but the Plants of a strange Vine, and that is you, Jer. 2.21. Now here I will consider you both as Parents, and how much your Children are the worse for you, and as Masters, and so how much your Families do suffer by you.

First, you are Parents, God hath crowned your Conjugal Relation with Posterity, but what is your Posterity but the Seed of evil doers, Children of those that have corrupted themselves? Those pure Souls which were created by God, were polluted and spoiled as soon as they entered into those bodies that came of you; you did convey a cross, froward depraved nature to your Children, who therefore are so bad because they are yours. It is said, Gen. 5.3. Adam begat a Son in his Image, and after his likeness, not in the Image and likeness of God, as Adam himself had been made at first, but in his own Image, in his Image not only as he was Man, but also as he was lapsed Man, his Son was like himself in Body and in Soul, and in Sin, and thus have the Sons of Adam done ever since. Job saith, Job 14.4. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Man being unclean, cannot make himself clean, let them wash in tears, let them wash with Snow water, he cannot fetch out the dirt, the spots and stains, he cannot wash himself clean; and being himself unclean, he cannot produce and bring forth that which is clean. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; weak flesh, sinful flesh; that water which is soiled and muddied at the Spring, cannot be pure and clear in the Stream. *Aethiopissae Filius nigrum ab ea Colorem trahit.* The Son of a Black-moor will be a Black-moor too. You know there are hereditary Diseases, as the Gout, Stone, Spleen, Lethargy, which commonly run in the blood, and are transmitted by the Parents to their Children; Sin is one of them, it is the worst of them, it sticks close, and descends from Parents to Children, and that from Generation to Generation,

without interruption, without exception, unless that of our dear Lord Jesus, who was to be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners, that he might be a Sacrifice, and a Savior, and in order thereunto, came into the World in an extraordinary way of generation, being formed in the Womb of a Virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost who over-shadowed her; otherwise Sin doth inseparably follow Nature, and never goeth out of the blood. So that I may call Parents the Channels, the Kennels, the Common-Sewers, in and through which all that abominable filth runs, which defiles their otherwise lovely and desirable Children, rendering them odious and abominable unto God. And never carry your heads high, because your Children are of a Noble or Gentile descent, come of such a Family, bear such account, or because you can leave them a great Estate, there is one thing, alas! That stains and spoils all that Glory, viz. It is from you they have it that they are born Sinners. And truly, as there is a great deal of joy at the birth of an Infant, because a Man-Child is Born into the World; so there is reason why that joy should be upon this account somewhat allayed, and mingled with grief and sorrow, that a Sinner is born into the World.

Secondly, Let us consider you as the Heads & Governors of Families; are not your Families the worse for you? You that are Husbands and Wives should be the better for one another, and fill your Relations, and carry in your places as those that are Co-heirs of the grace of life, that you may have cause of blessing God you ever came together. But reflect and curiously inquire, are not you the worse for one another, and are not your Children and Servants in some respects the worse for you both? You that have no Religious Duties performed in your Houses, are for certain very injurious to them, by that your omission; for you teach them Atheism, neglect and contempt of God; you teach them to live without God in the World, like so many Brutes; you do thereby teach them to neglect their precious and immortal Souls, and

to mind nothing but the concernments of a vile and perishing Body, and the inferior good things of a Transitory World: But what do you think of yourselves who are the best, who walk most closely with God; do you foot it so right that you do not sometimes tread awry? Do you demean yourselves with so much exactness, that nothing amiss is to be discerned in you? Do you order your carriages and conversations with so much judgment and circumspection, that they are without fault, and blameless. David saith, Who can understand his errors? And, if thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? And have you not read such passages as these in the Scriptures? There is not a just Man upon Earth that liveth and sinneth not. In many things we sin all. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. There are too many graceless Persons in the World, but there is not one sinless Person; there are many holy Persons who have been washed, and justified, and sanctified, but not one that is cleansed from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and who hath attained to a perfection in his holiness, and can you think that your blemishes and miscarriages are invisible? Do not those that live and converse with you observe you? Yes, they do, and see more spots in your faces than you do in your own, though you look in the glass; and they will be exceeding apt to tread in your steps, and to imitate you, especially in that which is evil, for unto that their own corrupt Nature doth incline, and like a strong Bias carry them that way; yea, and your example shall be made use of and pleaded as their sufficient Warrant. If they should be reprov'd by some sober judicious Persons for doing that which they should not, they will justify themselves thus; I saw my Father or my Mother do so, my Master or my Mistress do so, and therefore I may do it too. Poor things, they do sometimes think of their Parents, and Masters above that which is meet, and not considering their imperfections, and that body of Sin and Death which they carry about with them; they do not in their following them make use of

that caution which they ought to do. Be serious, my dear Friends, be serious and consider whether your Children and Servants be not the worse for your Pride, discovered in your haughty looks, and lofty words, and stately gestures, and costly garbs and dresses; the worse for your Passion, shewn in sharpened Eyes, furious Countenances, and words like Swords and Daggers; the worse for your misspense of time, in vain visits, frothy discourses, games and recreations, and lazy lying in Bed upon the Lord's Day, till much of the morning is lost, and a considerable part of the Public Worship be over before you come into the Congregation. In short, are they not the worse for this, and that, and the other; yea for many things, which your own Consciences (if you please to consult them, and give them free leave to speak) can and will inform you of far better than I can, being every day with you, and in you, and keeping a Book of Accounts, in which is inserted and recorded what it observes.

Now then, ought you not to repair this damage to your utmost? And since you have done, and go on to do them so much hurt, should you not do them all the good you can, and be heartily glad when it is in your power to do it? Have you shewn them many things by which they have offended God? And will you not show them by counsel and practice those things that will please him? I beseech you to bestir and lay out yourselves and your all for the making of them amends, and the recovering them out of that Snare of the Devil into which you have helped to bring them.

In what I now say, I do not put you upon impossibilities, nor the doing of that which is without the reach of your power. I do not bid you sanctify them by forming Christ, and planting Grace in their hearts. I do not bid you raise them out of the Grave of Corruption, and breath into their Souls the Breath of Spiritual Life; that must be effected by the Arm of Omnipotency; none else can do it, none hath a



Regenerating Power, but he that hath a Creating Power; but you may pray for them in your private Retirements, and you may pray with them that God would be pleased to give them his Spirit, and to work his Grace in them: You may take your Children and your Servants with you, and carry them to God, and beg of him that he would pity and help them. As you read, when our Lord Jesus was here upon Earth, Tabernacling among Men, they came to him from all parts of the Land, begging of him a Cure for themselves, and their Children and their Servants, as the matter did require. Now Christ is in Heaven, he hath the same power, that you must needs believe and grant; for here he was in his State of lowest Humiliation, there he is in his State of highest Preferment and Exaltation. After his Resurrection he told his Disciples, all Power was given him both in Heaven and Earth, and distance of place doth not hinder. He can help afar off as well as at hand, his Arm being long as well as strong. There is no need of this great Physician leaving his Fathers Right Hand, and coming down in Person to cure Diseased Souls; by sending his Word he can heal them, as he did formerly; Psal. 107, v. 20. And his Glory hath not in the least detracted from his Mercy. His Heart is now what it was, as loving and tender; his Bowels are not shrunk up, nor do his Compassions fail. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, and today, and forever; Heb. 13.8. As his Hand of Power is not shortened, so his gracious Ear is not grown heavy; therefore go to him, taking Faith along with you, and say, Lord, my Children were born blind, O! Do thou anoint them with thine Eye-salve, that they may receive their sight. Open their Eyes that they may see wonderful things out of thy Law, and the precious things of thy Gospel; that they may see the sinfulness of Sin, and the beauty of Holiness; that they may see their own undone condition, and the absolute need they have of Christ, together with the all-sufficiency of his Righteousness, and the riches of his Grace, the sweetness of his Government, and the easiness of his Yoke. Go to him and say, Lord, my Children are

grievously troubled with a Devil, a proud Devil, a lying Devil, a disobedient, stubborn, obstinate Devil, O that thou wouldest make thy Power known in the casting of him out! Once more, go to him and say, Lord, My Children have got the Leprosy of Sin, it hath spread itself all over them: O do thou say, I will be ye clean. My Children are Enemies in their Minds by wicked works, Enemies to Thee and all that is spiritually good, O do thou reconcile them! That of Enemies to Thee they may become Enemies to Sin, and for the time to come they may love thy Father, thy Self and Spirit, thy Truth and Ways. Lord, My Children are the Slaves of Satan, and they delight in their Chain; they serve divers Lusts, and are pleased with their Bondage, and count their Drudgery a Recreation. O! Let these Lawful Captives of the Mighty be delivered, break their Chains asunder, and bring them into the Liberty of thy Children, and, as they have yielded their members Servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity, unto iniquity, even so now and for the time to come they may yield their members, Servants to righteousness unto holiness; Rom. 6.20. And what you do to this purpose for your Children, do also for your Servants; take them up in the Arms of your Love and Prayer, and lay them at the foot of God, and beg him that he would sanctify and save them.

And as you can thus pray and plead with God for them, so you can add hereunto if you will. There are other things which you can do: You cannot infuse into them a Principle of Grace, but you may teach them the Principles of Religion; you may show the way in which they should walk, though you cannot put that way in their hearts; as we have that expression; Psal. 84.5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart are the ways of them. You cannot bow their Wills to God's, nor raise and spiritualize their Affections, nor set them upon their proper Objects, those things which are above, but you may inform their Judgments. You cannot write the Law of God

in their hearts, nor put his Fear into their inward parts, but you may acquaint them with the Law of God, and read the Bible to them, and hear them read both it and other Orthodox good Books, but the Bible most and rather than the best Books in the World. So again, you cannot make them good, but you may set a good Example before them, and write a very fair Copy for them to imitate, and invite them to tread in your steps, saying to them as Paul did, Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ, and walk so as ye have us for an example. It is certain, all this is in your power, you may do it; and oh that you would! Oh that you would abound in the doing of it! Considering how much you have done against them, how greatly you have prejudiced them, how much they have suffered through your means, how much they have been tainted by you. Really, you are obliged to this, this is no more than what you owe to these poor Creatures, and if you are careless, negligent and wanting herein, you are unjust, you withhold that which is meet, and it tends to your own poverty, and sorrow at the last; it is in the power of your hand to do it, therefore do not withhold it from them to whom it is due; it is a Debt, and that both of Charity and of Equity; up then in your several Families, and apply to this excellent needful work; for the Lord's sake apply to it with diligence and cheerfulness; what your hand findeth to do herein, do with all your might: And since your planting and watering will turn to no account, unless God give the increase, begin and second all these holy endeavors with prayer. Beg of God that he would open their understandings, and hearts, that he would work together with you, and by you, and that he would be pleased to out-do you; that he would work that in them and for them which you cannot.

III. Consider seriously whose your Children and Servants are; they are yours, yea and they are God's as well as yours, God's more than yours.

First; They are yours. Your Children are yours by Nature, begotten or born of you; parts of yourselves; from you under God they had their Being. Your Servants are yours by Compact or Covenant. And here let us call again to mind what was said before, they are both your Charge, and therefore they ought to be your Care; you are to look to them; you will look to your Money and Goods, and not lose them if you can help it. The Country-man will look to his Corn and Cattle that he may not lose them, and is there not reason for as great care here, and greater too? Our Savior said, It is the will of him that sent me, that of all whom he hath given me I should lose none; and I am sure it is so here. It is the will of him that sent you into the World, that of all whom he hath given you, you should lose none. There may be indeed, as there was in Christ's Family, so in yours, a Son, a Daughter of Perdition, who lose themselves, who will ruin and destroy themselves, and their Blood will be upon their own heads. But have you a care that you do not lose them through your willful carelessness and neglect. For, as I have said, they are your Charge, and believe me, the Charge of a Family is a great Charge, of mighty weight and importance as all the World, all ranks and degrees of Men will find it when that day shall come in which the Eternal God will reckon with them. You know that if any one come by an untimely Death, whether it be in the City, or in the Country, the Coroners Inquest must be called and sit upon the Body, who ought to make a strict and impartial Enquiry about it, that the Murderer might be discovered and brought to condign Punishment, because there is not only the Loss of a Relation or a Servant, but also the King hath lost a Subject. Bring this to the present case before us; here is such an one, a Soul lost in this Family, and there is another lost in that Family, and so in a great many more, the Lord only knows how great the number of them is. How many thousand of Souls do every day drop into Hell! If people would give themselves leave seriously to consider it, it would make their hearts to ache and dissolve into Tears; and

peradventure it is, nay I do not in the least question but it is the case of some of your Families. You have lost a Child, and you a Daughter and you a Servant, in that sense in which the compassionate Father said concerning his Prodigal, This my Son was lost, he was dead. He was dead in trespasses and sins; the poor mournful Father had lost him, and the Devil taken him up for a Stray; but these of yours are lost beyond the possibility of a recovery, their Souls are lost forever; they are dead, and dead in sin; their Bodies are laid in the Grave in a Bed of Dust and their Souls are gone down to Hell, and there laid upon a Bed of Flames, which Divine Justice hath prepared for them, and the Breath of the Lord like as a stream of Brimstone doth feed. But now here God hath lost a Creature, one that was the work of his own hands; and you may be sure, that He will make Inquisition for Blood: How did this Soul, and that Soul come thus to miscarry? Was it their own doing? Was it through their own folly and madness, because they would not hearken to the Voice of their Teachers? Or was it through the neglect of those to whose care and tuition they were committed? The guilt of every ones Blood shall be laid some where, and God will lay it where it ought to lie; and there is, as you may gather from what hath been said, reason why God should thus proceed; because,

Secondly; They (I mean your Children and Servants) are God's as well as yours, nay they are more God's than yours. He indeed gave them to you, as Jacob told his Brother, These are the Children which God hath graciously given to thy Servant. But when he gave them to you, he did not alienate them from himself, nor part with his own Right, but reserves that whole and entire to himself. He so gives them to us, that still they are his: Yea, they are more his than ours. And so it is with all our other Enjoyments. Take one Scripture or two for the proof of this; first as to our Enjoyments, some Men think their Estates are their own, and their Money their own, so that they

may do with them whatsoever they please, but it is no such matter, we are but Stewards, God is the Lord of all. For this see Hos. 2.8, 9. I gave her Corn and Wine, and multiplied her Silver and Gold. They were his, and he gave them to her: But observe now, he retained a propriety in them, and therefore upon her misemploying and abusing them, he threatened to take them away. I will return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the season thereof, and recover my Wool and my Flax. They were hers by virtue of God's donation, but they were his also, and now she should know as much, for he will turn her out, and take the Possession of all again. This consideration should make all wary that they do not sin with their Enjoyments, nor maintain their Lusts at God's cost, nor with God's allowances make provision for the Flesh; and it should also teach rich Men to do good with what they have, and quicken them to acts of Piety and Charity: Your Estates are yours, but they are God's too, and therefore as you ought to use them for your own good and comfort, so you must lay them out for God's honor, and for God's poor; for the Sovereign right in your Estates is in God; and it is the same as to your Children, God lays his claim to them, Ezek. 16.20, 21. Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy Whoredoms a small matter that thou hast slain my Children, and delivered them to cause them to pass thorough the fire for them? Mark it, the Lord grants they were her Children, but he doth also call them his Children, he owns that she did bear them, but saith, thou didst bear them to me; as it was then, so it is now; as the Cattle upon a thousand Hills are his, so the Children of a thousand Families, yea, of all the Families upon the Earth; particularly of his Covenanting People, Jer. 31.1. I will be, saith the Lord, the God of all the Families of Israel, and they shall be my people. He is the God of all the Children of those Families, they are his Children; remember and consider it, your Children are God's Children, they had their

Being from him, he formed them, he brought them forth, and brought them up, and carried them in Arms, and taught them to go, and put them out to you to Nurse, and you are to look after them, and take care of them, and bring them up for him; you are to see to it that they have the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

So for your Servants, they are not only your Servants, but his too, they were his Servants before they were yours, and his more than they are yours, and more bound to obey and please him than you; so that if your Will thwart God's, and your Commands be contrary to the Commandments of God, they are not to do them, they are more bound to God than they are to you, and they expect more from him than they do from you, and have a greater and more necessary dependence upon him than they have upon you, and therefore they owe him more service than they do you, Psal. 119.19. All are thy Servants, Kings and Princes are his Servants, David was free to own it, O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant. And Oh that they would all lay their Crowns at his Feet, and serve him by ruling for him. You that are Masters and Mistresses are his Servants, as proud as some of you are, and how high soever you hold your Heads, yet know you are but Servants, though really it is not your disparagement to be God's Servants, but your Honor so that you are good and faithful Servants, and I beseech you look to that. And I say your Servants are God's Servants too; yea, and what the Angel said to John I may to you, notwithstanding the civil distance which is now between you, they are your Fellow-servants, as you will find at the last and great day, when you come to be stripped of all these outward pre-eminencies, and to stand upon even ground with them, only your account will be greater. Sit down, I beseech you, and think of this once and again, those that are bound to you are also bound to God; and will you teach them your Business, and not that which God hath given them to do? Will you take care to make them good

Shopkeepers, and not to make them good Christians? Will you call upon them, and urge and press them to do your work, yea, and beat them too, in case they do it not, and will you not regard their doing or neglecting of the work of God? Shall it be nothing to you though they forget God, and let his work lie dead upon their hands, and serve the Devil and diverse Lusts all the Year round? You yourselves do not serve God as you ought, if you do not promote what you can your Servants serving him, for so to do is part of your business, it is the duty of your place.

Besides, let me here add this further, if the Parents of those who are bound to you be gracious themselves, and do indeed fear God, they did expect much from you when they did bind them to you; they had a good Opinion of you as of Persons truly Religious, and of your Families as Religious, and that their Sons would meet not only with sobriety there, but also with the practices of Piety, and they did promise themselves that they had disposed well of their Children, and chosen such Masters for them as would take special care of them as to their Souls, and go on to build upon that good Foundation which they themselves had already laid, and that you would be not only giving them an insight into your Callings, but also showing them the good way in which they ought to walk, and go before them in it, they did promise themselves that you would provide not only Meat and Drink, wholesome and sufficient Diet for their Bodies, but also that Food which would help to the nourishing of their Souls to Eternal Life. In that hope, and for that end they committed them to you, and if you be careless herein, if you do not pray with them, nor instruct and counsel them, you disappoint their expectations, you frustrate and deceive their hopes, you are false to your trust, and it is impossible that you should ever answer it to God or them, and yet answer for it you shall, but to your cost except you repent and reform.



IV. Remember and consider that those who are of your Families, and under your care are excellent and noble Creatures. How low soever their outward condition is, and how far soever they are beneath you upon worldly accounts, yet they were made by the same hand, are of the same original, the Masterpieces of the Creation in this inferior World; and here I will more particularly offer these few things to your thoughts.

First; They have Souls as well as you. Souls to save, as well as Bodies to feed, Souls that quicken and actuate their Bodies, and render them capable of being serviceable to you; and be their Bodies never so amiable and lovely, never so robust and well built, never so lively and active, yet without the Soul they would be no other than useless Carcasses, lumps of Clay; both unprofitable and unsavory, and these Souls being the better, and by far the more noble part, are to be principally respected, to be sure not totally forgotten and neglected; and a Trade is to be driven with Heaven for them, as well as one upon Earth for the Body; and though it be no great matter whether they be great and rich in the World, yet it is necessary that they be rich in Faith, and good Works, and toward God; and since there is another World beside this, and when they go out of this World they immediately pass into that, and they must continue there to all Eternity without a remove, or any alteration, it is absolutely necessary that they be well provided before they go, and lay up Treasures in Heaven. As for the things of this World they must leave them all behind them, though they have gotten never so much; Riches take to themselves Wings, and often fly away, they leave their owners in a pitiful plight; however their owners must at last leave them. Death, when once it comes will make an Eternal separation; so Job knew, and said, Job 1. Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked shall I return thither. Hence it follows, that they are nearly and everlastingly concerned to look after those things which

are better and more durable: To get that knowledge of God and Jesus Christ which is life eternal, and to be well stored with those Graces, and that everlasting righteousness of Christ, which will accompany them to the Tribunal, and to be much busied and employed about those works which will follow them in glorious Rewards, for otherwise it had been better for them they had never been Born.

Secondly; Do you know the Souls of your Children and Servants are as precious as yours? Whatever difference there may be in your Bodies, as to their stature, and strength, and comeliness, and beauty, yet your Souls are the same, and theirs come not into the World more corrupt, guilty, and depraved than yours; Original Sin is the same in all the Sons and Daughters of Adam, their Souls are as precious as yours; for,

First; The same God made them, Ezek. 18.4. Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; and as the Soul of the Master, so also the Soul of the Servant; and as the Soul of the Mistress, so the Soul of the Maid, they are all God's; as he is the Creator of them, and the Lord of them, and the Supreme Judge of them: And he hath a respect to them all as they are the work of his hands, as an Artist hath to a curious piece of his own making.

Secondly; Their Souls have the same Faculties and Powers that yours have; Understanding, Memory, Conscience, Will, Affections; they are intelligent and rational Souls, though they have not had the same opportunities, means and advantages for their accomplishments, which some of you have had and slighted, and not improved as you ought.

Thirdly; Their Souls cost as great a price to redeem as yours; supposing them to be some of Christ's purchased ones, God did not set several Rates upon the Souls of Men, nor did the Lord Jesus pay a

greater Ransom for the Soul of David a King than he did for the Soul of Lazarus a Beggar, not a greater for the Soul of the Master than for the Soul of the Servant, for the Soul of the Mistress than of the Maid, but the very same, both the one and the other did stand him in no less than his Heart-blood; and he rejoiceth over the one when Converted, Sanctified, and brought into his Fold, and under his Government as the other; and he will at last as much welcome the one into his heavenly Kingdom, and as abundant an entrance into it shall be ministered to the one as to the other.

Fourthly; Their Souls may have the same Capacities; and allowing them the like advantages for improvement, and the like opportunities for action, they may be as useful in the World while they live, and very serviceable, bringing a great deal of glory to God, and doing a great deal of good to Man. Valleys are usually fertile, when lofty Mountains are barren; and those that are poor in this World, are frequently rich in good works; and they are receptive of as great Preferment, Happiness and Glory in the World to come. They may, and will be as quick and nimble in their flight to Heaven, they may as sweetly and comfortably enjoy God, and be as much fitted and prepared for the Divine Presence and Bliss, and for a setting upon the Right Hand of Christ, as the Master or the Mistress; nay, some of them may be advanced to an higher degree of Glory, and Eternally shine with brighter Beams: but on the contrary, if these their precious Souls do not go to Heaven, they must be packed down to Hell; if they are not Saved they must be Damned; if not taken up to the Enjoyment of God, then they are Companions for Devils; if not Timber for the Building, then Fuel for the Burning; if they be not taken up into the Arms of Divine Love, they will be the miserable Objects of Divine Wrath and Fury, and lie restless and roaring under unsufferable Torments, in which they can have no relief, not so much

as a drop of Water to cool their Tongue, and from which they shall have no deliverance.

And now, O ye Fathers and Mothers, and ye Masters and Mistresses, what are ye made of? Have you Hearts harder than a Rock? Are you worse than the Sea-monsters, and like unto the Ostriches in the Wilderness? Where are your Mercies? Where your Bowels? Where the yearning and the soundings of them? Will you not pity these precious Souls? Have you no kindness nor compassion for them? Do you not desire their good? Will you not seek their good? Will not you do what in you lies to prevent their everlasting ruin and destruction? It is no wonder that Devils who befooled themselves into endless misery, and are enraged against God, and implacable Enemies to Men, envying them the possibility of being saved; it is, I say, not any matter of wonder at all that they do what they can to ruin them, and to bring them into the same misery with themselves; but will you do nothing to prevent it? Will not you do what you can to spoil the Devils design, and to secure these precious Souls from the Snare of the Devil, or deliver them out of it? What! Not you who have curam animarum, the care and charge of Souls lying upon you; not you, to whose oversight they are committed? Not you, who are Responsible for them, and will at last be called to an account, will you let them perish without endeavoring to save them, and let them go down to Hell without laboring to stop them in their Career? Will you stand by and see them drown without reaching forth an helping Hand? For God's sake be not so cruel, so hard-hearted, put on Bowels, put on Bowels.

Will it not be a bitter reflection to you at the last, when the matter is out of your hands, and past remedy? Will it not grieve you? Will it not go to your very Hearts? In short, will it not be a Sword in your Bones, and a tormenting Sting in your Consciences, when you shall

think such a Child of mine, and such a Servant of mine are now lost, irrecoverably, everlastingly lost, and they may thank me for it; they were grossly ignorant, and I took no care to teach them; they went on in a course of sin, and I did not endeavor to reclaim them, and they have now fatally miscarried, but it is thorough my fault as well as their own: had I done what I might have done, had I done what it was in the power of my hand to do, possibly it might never have come to this; as Joseph 's Brethren in their distress said one to another, Gen. 42.21. We are verily guilty concerning our brother; so may you say, I am guilty, verily I am guilty concerning these my Children, and these my Servants: and really it is strange to me that you do enjoy any peace, that you can walk about in quietness in the day, and rest in the night, and are not scared with frightful Apparitions. I ascribe it merely to the patience and goodness of God, that since poor Creatures are forever ruined thorough your sinful neglect, their Ghosts after their death do not continually haunt you, and dog you from place to place, and from room to room, and undraw your Curtains, and with a ghastly Countenance and dreadful Looks stare you in the Face; for their Blood lieth on you, yea, it is you that have been their Murderers, you have Murdered their precious Souls, you have poisoned them by your bad and heathenish Examples, by your living in a wretched, ungrateful forgetfulness of God, and in a sinful, vile neglect of his Worship and Service, not having his glory in your Eyes, nor his fear before them: You have been the death of them by with-holding from them that which was their due; Family-instruction which you were obliged to have given them, and other Family-duties which you were bound to have performed with them.

V. And lastly, I judge it worth while as to the business in hand to inquire of you that are Parents, Whether your Children have not been dedicated and given up to God in and by Baptism? And of you

that are Masters and Governors of Families, whether you do not believe that the Fathers and Mothers of those who are your Apprentices and Servants have also dedicated and given them up unto God? I know there is room and reason enough at this day for such a Question; because the Administration of that Ordinance unto the Infants of Believers themselves is by so many denied and decried; and therefore I ask again, whether they have been brought under the Bond of the Covenant? And whether they have had the Seal of the Covenant ministered to them? Have they not been Baptized? I do heartily wish that the Children of all professed Christians were; and whatever dust hath been raised, and is continued, I doubt not, but when that happy time shall come wherein the Jews shall be converted, and brought to the owning and believing in our dear Lord Jesus, that Controversy will be happily determined, and Infant-baptism found to be not of Men but of God. But I ask now, whether yours have been Baptized? If they have, then,

First; Know and consider that God hath a special right and propriety in them. A more special Interest in your Children and Servants, and a more peculiar right to them than he hath in and to others in the World. He hath a right to others, to all by virtue of Creation and Preservation, as they are the work of his Hands, from whom they received their Being at the first, and by whom their Being is continued, and their Souls held in Life; but he hath another superadded right to these, viz. by virtue of Donation, the Parents Gift; they have a natural right to dispose of their Children, and these have disposed of theirs to God, which was an act of the highest Wisdom, and dearest Love; all indeed are God's Servants, and let them carry toward him accordingly, but Persons Baptized are his Sealed Servants.

Secondly; Not to train such up for God, is not only cruelty to them, yea, prodigious and barbarous cruelty, but likewise it is apparent injustice to God; yea, it is Sacrilege, the worst of Sacrilege. It is accounted, and is a wicked thing to rob Churches of their Vestments, and Ornaments, and Plate, but what is that to a robbing God of Men, and Women, and Children, and delivering them up to Vanity, and Sin, and the Devil; certainly that propriety which God hath in them, your Children and Servants, is a great obligation upon you to bring them up for him, and to instruct them in his work and service, and to make them join with you therein, that by being well acquainted with it, and used to it, they may be expert at it, that they may carry as becomes them, and act in a sweet suitableness to that Relation in which they stand to God, and be in the better capacity of setting up his Worship afterward in their Families, when they come to have Houses of their own, that by this means Religion may be posteritized, and descend among you from Generation to Generation, and when you are gone down to your Graves there may not want those who will stand up in their day to serve, own, and honor the God of their Fathers.

Thirdly; Would it not be a trouble to you if those that are yours should prove wicked? Without peradventure, if you are Christians indeed, as you profess yourselves; if you have any real goodness in you, and not merely a vain show and empty name, if you have any Sense, if any Bowels, if any softness and tenderness of Heart, it cannot but be very affecting to you, and exceeding grievous to you to think that any of yours should prove Sons and Daughters of Belial, Persons that know not the Lord, and that fear not the Lord; sure I am, the very fear of such a thing hath made some gracious Persons go bowed down, and in the bitterness of their Spirits; nay, would it not grieve you that any of your Servants who are God's, should turn Rebels against him, or that any of your Servants, who are God's more

than yours should prove desperate Enemies to him, and instead of delighting in his Service, and laying out their All for his Glory and the Interest of his Name, of whom you have had so long and ample Experience, and unto whom they also are so much engaged, should absurdly turn their Backs against him, and do the sordid, filthy works of sin, and drudge for a Devil, and after all their pains receive no other wages than death, yea, the second death, which will be followed with a Burial in Hell, out of which there is no Resurrection; and there is one thing more, which I commend to you as worthy of your solemn and frequently repeated thoughts, viz. That it will greatly add to your guilt, and by consequence no less add to your affliction and horror, if it be impressed and set home upon your Consciences, that this miscarriage of theirs did come to pass through any gross and willful neglect of yours, and was the bitter effect of your failure in point of duty which you did owe both to God and to them. Let me tell you, how light soever any that hear me, or read this Book may make of these things now in this damnably Atheistical and Profane Age, yet you will find them like a Talent of Lead, yea, heavier than a Mountain, when God is pleased to set them home. Unto what hath been spoken with reference both to your Children and Servants; there is something which I would add with respect to your Children in particular, and that is this.

Fourthly; You that are Parents, consider, I beseech you, and lay to heart your own actual dedicating and giving your Children up to God. Have you not done it? I ask you again, have you not done it? And that in the most sacred and solemn way of a Gospel Ordinance; while others did satisfy themselves with giving their Children a Name, as if they had not at that time God in any of their thoughts, as a Person in the least concerned, you did present and bind them to God, out of a seeming, yea, and professed sense of duty to him, and kindness to them; did not you go to or send for a Minister, desiring of him that



your Children might be made partakers of Baptism? And were they not by that made (as I said before) God's sealed Servants? You do, as I suppose and hope, at least, you should know, that Baptism comes in the room of Circumcision, and is the Seal of the Covenant, and so by your bringing them to Baptism you did, as a Learned Divine, Mr. Whiston, saith, give them up to God under your Hand and Seal; some of you have done it publicly, in the Face of the whole Congregation, which without doubt is the best way, and I do heartily wish it were universally and constantly practiced, (unless where absolute necessity forbids;) because being rightly administered, and according to the Institution and Command of our great Lord, it is most for Edification, which ought to be studied in all the Churches of Christ; but others, who for Reasons best known to themselves have chosen Privacy, did Invite some of your Friends and Neighbors that they might be Witnesses of it in your own Families. Now I look upon it as being so evident that it is past a contradiction, that this your giving them up to God did not only express your belief of that right which God had to them, nor only your willingness they should be his Servants, nor only your committing them to his care and conduct; but also did necessarily imply a purpose to train and bring them up for God. If that was not in your Hearts and Resolutions, what you did therein was a mere cheat, you did in that great and solemn work act the part of vile Hypocrites, and mocked both God and Man. Sure I am, many of you did engage yourselves to do this, you promised it, yea, and that in totidem terminis, in so many words, the great God of Heaven is himself a Witness thereof, and so are all that were present; and what now my Friends? Have you not bound yourselves? And will you play fast and loose with God? An honest Man will be as good as his word, and will not you? Will you forfeit that Name? Will you lose your Credit in Heaven, yea, and among good Men upon Earth that know you? How should any Man trust you who are not true to God, unto whom you are so much obliged, and upon whom you have an

absolute dependence? Dare any of you go from your words? Dare you? Again I say, dare you? What, deal falsely with God! If Covenant-bonds are no more to you than the green Withes, or new Cords were to Samson, which he easily snapped asunder; if your Promises will signify nothing, but vanish like Winds, know, God hath other Bonds that are strong enough, Bonds of Wrath and Fury, everlasting Chains that will hold you; if your own Promises are not sufficient to bind you to your duty, your breach of Promise will be sufficient to bind you over to punishment. The Apostle Paul speaking of God, saith, 1 Thes. 5.24. Faithful is he who hath called you, that also will do it. God hath called you to a Fellowship and Communion with him, and he hath made many great and precious Promises, and he is a faithful God, a Covenant-keeping God, a Promise-performing God, and he also will do it; do it, what will he do? That which he hath promised, all that he hath promised, no one iota or tittle shall fail; consider this, and let it not be said of you, that you have indeed promised, but you are unfaithful, and you will not do it; you are very strict with Men, expecting they should keep their word with you, and keep day too, but you make no Conscience of keeping your word with God. Consider again what the same holy Apostle saith, 2 Cor. 1.20. All the promises of God are in him, i.e., in Christ, yea, and in him, Amen, to the glory of God. They are all so, God is not off and on with his People, his Promises are immutable, things in which it is impossible for him to Lie, he can as soon deny himself as them; they shall all be performed in their season, and to the full. Christians, do you trust this God, and rely upon these Promises, and rejoice in them as assurance enough? But withal, do you study an holy conformity and likeness to this God? And never let it be said of you, that your Promises are Yea and Nay. Once more let me propound to you the Example of that excellent Person Hannah, who was a Woman of a sorrowful Spirit, her Adversary Peninnah provoking her sore to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her Womb. We find, 1 Sam. 1,

that in her affliction she prayed, which is a proper course, a good vent to an oppressed Soul, a Sovereign Remedy in distress. In her Prayer she begged that God would look on her affliction, and remember her, and give her a man-child; and as she prayed so she promised, that if God would fulfil her desire in giving her a Son, she would give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and she did so. When God had granted her Prayer she performed her Promise; when she had the desire of her Heart, God had given her a Son, whose Name she called Samuel, she and her Husband Elkanah brought him to the House of the Lord which was in Shiloh, and so having obtained him of God by Prayer, she returned him unto God with Thankfulness, and while he was a Child, a very young Child, soon after he was weaned she carried him thither, viz. unto the Tabernacle, 1 Sam. 1.25, 26, 27, 28. The Child was young, and they slew a Bullock, and brought the Child to Eli, and she said, O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the Woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord; for this Child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him, therefore also have I lent him unto the Lord as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord; and there she left him with good old Eli the Priest, that by him he might be tutored, educated, and brought up for God, and instructed in the Law, and so the better prepared and fitted for the work and service of God in his Generation. But that I may shut up this Particular, I will look upon this Congregation as having in it Persons of different Persuasions about the Ordinance of Baptism, or the Persons unto whom it is to be administered, the Subjects capable of it, and I shall speak something to both.

First; There are possibly some Persons, though I suppose not many of them, here present before the Lord, who are not satisfied in their Consciences about Infant-baptism, and therefore have not that sacred Ordinance administered unto their Children during that their

Minority, that Sign or Token of the Covenant is not set or given to them, as apprehending them to be in the same condition with those who are Aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenants of Promise; though the truth is, the Children of Believers are the holy Seed, born Members of that Commonwealth, and within the Covenant of Promise. But I dispute not the Point with them, having in mine Age something else to do than to spend my few precious hours in Controversies; but this I would say to all those that are of that Persuasion, that it doth very greatly concern them to be very careful and constant in the performance of Family-duties, and I should be very glad to hear that they are conscientious, and as diligent therein as the matter doth require. Oh! That they would take pains and spend a convenient portion of time in praying with their unbaptized Children and Servants, and in Instructing and Catechizing of them, and in using all the means which God hath appointed, and that are within the compass of their power, that so they might be brought to the knowledge of God, and to a believing in, owning of, and submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to a laying hold upon the Covenant; that so they may, when grown up, have a right to the benefits of it, and partake of the Blessings of it, and be fit to receive the Seal of it; and my hearty Prayer to the Father of Mercies, and God of all Grace on their behalf is, that they may lay it to their Hearts as they ought, and often think with themselves how much it stands them in hand, and what an obligation resulting from their own Principles, lies upon them to be very holy in their Lives, and very industrious in their Places for the good of their Families, and in order to the working of Knowledge in their Heads, and Grace in their Hearts, and Holiness in their Lives, that of those concerning whom they do now say, They are none of God's people, God may be graciously pleased to say, They are my people, and I am the Lord their God; But,

Secondly; There are others here, with and for whom I am more concerned, as being of that Flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made me an Overseer; and these are for the Baptizing of Children in their Infancy, and so for an early dedication and binding of them to God and his Service; you are my Charge, and I can say as to many of you, you are my Joy and Crown, and, I hope, will be so in the day of Christ: and it is my hearty Desire and Prayer that you may adorn the Gospel, and walk unto all well-pleasing, and make it your endeavor to stand complete in all the Will of God. Now I would have you all to know, and do entreat you to consider and remember that (as a worthy Divine, as yet I hope in the Land of the Living hath observed) there is an equal Tye, and full out as strong an Obligation to an holy care and diligence this way, lying upon those Parents that are for the Baptizing of Children in their Infancy, as there is upon those that are against it; you ought not to be more slack and remiss in teaching and rightly principling your Baptized Children than they are in instructing their unbaptized Children; you ought to be as diligent in bringing them up graciously whom you have bound to God, as they are or can be in the Education of them whom they do thus far leave at liberty, though indeed you do not drive on the same design with them, nor level and aim at the same end they do, for as he saith, and it is true, Antipaedo -baptists, who are conscientious, and do indeed love and fear the Lord, ought and will endeavor to bring up their Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and earnestly to seek their conversion and turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, and their personal embracing and laying hold upon the Covenant, that thereupon they may be brought into a Covenant-state, that they may be admitted and taken into Covenant, and that they may come under the Wing, and Benefit, and Blessing of it.

Whereas those holy Parents who have their Children Baptized in their Infancy have not that in their Eye as their end, for they do not doubt of their Covenant-state, for they do firmly hold their being Born in Covenant with God, as they are the Children of Believers, and they also know that that Covenant hath been sealed to them; yet notwithstanding they do reckon themselves greatly concerned and no less obliged to endeavor the Instruction and Conversion, and their own personal owning and embracing of the Covenant, and Cordial, Cheerful coming up to the terms and requiries of it; and that for these Considerations and Reasons which I shall name, and lightly touch, and so pass on.

First; That they might understand their Duty, what it is that the Lord their God requires of them, and what their Parents did in their young and tender years bind them to the observance and performance of, that through their own folly and default they may not be cast out and cut off, as Ishmael was though he had Abraham for his Father, and had himself been Circumcised; and so it was with Esau afterwards. Now these Parents do not think it enough that the Covenant between God and their Children hath been struck and sealed, but they would have it established, everlasting and sure, they would have their Children kept, preserved in a Covenant-state, live and die in it.

Secondly; It is the earnest desire of such holy and gracious Parents, not only that their children might be preserved in a Covenant-state, but also that they might be happy sharers in the good of it, and the Benefits and Blessings thereof may descend upon them; for Persons may be in a Covenant-state, and yet fall short of the best and richest Blessings of it, such as are the fruits of special love, and distinguishing. As a Man may be in Christ the true Vine, and yet not partake of his sap and fatness, John 15. So he may be in Covenant, and yet not have Covenant-grace, nor a Covenant-spirit; a Man may

be externally in a Covenant-state, and yet in an unregerate, and unjustified-state; and therefore that which doth most strongly engage Parents to teach their Children, and endeavor the bringing them up to the terms of the Covenant, is that they might so honor, obey, and please God as withal to reap and enjoy all those great good things, precious Mercies, and singular Blessings which are contained in the Covenant, and conveyed by it.

Thirdly; A being faithful to the Covenant, and a living up to its terms, and performing its conditions, is the Duty and Interest of all those who would be savingly the better for it; unto that a continuance in the Covenant is of equal necessity with an entrance and admission into it. How can any Man make that Covenant his plea or argument, or rationally expect Life and Happiness from it, who himself hath violated and broken it; that Person whose own sin hath cast him out of Covenant, hath no more interest in, nor right to the Blessings thereof than he that was never in it. Nay,

Fourthly; The condition of such an one is far the worse and more dismal of the two, as his sins are more accented, more black, more provoking and crying than the sins of another, being breaches of Covenant, sins against greater Obligations, so there is less hope of him, his case is more dangerous and desperate, the Wound that he hath made looks as if it were altogether incurable, and the Wrath that such an one is like to suffer may well be more fiery and fierce, the Judgments more severe, not Rods but Scorpions are proper in such a case; what will God do when he comes to avenge the quarrel of his Covenant.

I have thus largely shewn you that are Parents and Governors of Families what Obligations you are under for the setting up and continuing of the Service and Worship of God in your Families, upon

the consideration of the young ones, the Children and Servants which are in your Houses, and under your Care; and I am not a little confident, that if you will be so just to the Cause, and yourselves, as to weigh the arguments, your Consciences will tell you the Obligation is very strong; and oh! That the truth delivered may be so upon you, and upon many more, that you may not be found rebelling against the light, nor holding the truth in Righteousness, but falling before it, and to your work. There remains but one Obligation more to this great and necessary Work of Family-Worship, and Duty, which I shall take notice of in this Discourse, and speak unto; and that doth arise from the consideration of the Public, the City, the Nation, the Church of God, unto which you are so nearly related, as being Parts and Members of them, and in which you are so highly concerned; your Relation is not so near, but that your interest is as great, ponder on these following Particulars.

Let this I beseech you, return often upon your thoughts, and lay it near your hearts; you are Citizens of London, Famous London, which Enemies have done much against, and God hath done great things for, what will you do for it? In London you have many Mercies, many Privileges, many Comforts; you are the Natives of England, the Free-born People of England, a sweet and pleasant name, be dear over it, both name and thing. It was in this Country that you first drew your breath, here that you were planted by the gracious hand of Divine Providence, and grown and flourished, and you would be exceeding unnatural and inhumanely cruel to this poor City, and to this pleasant Land, the Land of your Nativity, if you do not heartily desire its welfare, and to the utmost seek its good. The Jews were to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, which was their Metropolis, their Capital City, where there were the Thrones of Judgment, the Thrones of the House of David, and whether the Tribes went up; the Tribes of the Lord, to the testimony of Israel. See how David excited others, and



resolved himself to contribute what might be to its happiness, Psal. 122.6, 7, 8, 9. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee, peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy Palaces; for my Brethren and Companions sake, I will now say, peace be within thee, because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good. We are as much bound to Pray for London, which is our English Jerusalem; was that the literal Jerusalem, the City of their Solemnities, so it is called, Isa. 33.20. London, through the goodness of a gracious God hath been, and in spite of Hell and Rome yet is the City of our Solemnities; and I beseech you read and think upon that which the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel said unto them who were carried away Captive from Jerusalem to Babylon, Jer. 29.7. Seek the peace of the City whither I have caused you to be carried away Captives, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof ye shall have peace. Now, if they were to pray for the peace of Babylon, which was the place of their Captivity, we are in reason much more bound to pray for, and by all means seek the peace and welfare of London, and England, which is the place of our Nativity.

Secondly, Cast your eye upon the present State of London, and of England, have not our iniquities brought us low? The hand of God hath been for many years, and in many ways heavy upon the Land, and it is stretched out still; the truth is, our preservation is wonderful, and the Lord hath done great things for us, of which we have reason to be glad, and to give him glory, but for all that we are brought low, the Crown is fallen from our head, our honor is under an Eclipse. In some respects England is scarce to be found in England, there is a withering blast upon us, and a sad dismal face of things. How many Judgments doth this Nation lie under, both Spiritual and Temporal? O! The sad Divisions that are among us, which grow wider instead of an healing Spirit; behold a perverse Spirit is gone forth in the midst of us; how do errors and all manner

of false Doctrines abound and swarm there? The Serpent hath cast out of his mouth like a flood, that he might drown and swallow up the Church of God among us. Now that she is in her wilderness State. What a Spirit of Atheism hath possessed Men? We have a company of wretches, that rather than they will own God, will hold they themselves shall die like Beasts; these are none of the old Fools, who said in their hearts there is no God, these have far out done them in speaking it with their mouths. I have indeed been told that some of these are very sensible Men, and indeed I do conclude, that not only some Atheists are so, but that they all are so, yea, and that they are altogether so, men immersed and quite sunk into sense, they have shaken hands with reason, quite blinded and put out the eye of reason; for otherwise, in the very things before them they would see the invisible things of God, even his Eternal Power and Godhead, Rom. 1.20. To which, I might add that general and monstrous profaneness which hath broken all banks, and overflowed us, which hath risen up to that height of impudence, that it can out-face the Sun, and walk unveiled at noon; and what do you feel? Hath not God, think you, risen out of his place to punish the Inhabitants of London, and of England, for their iniquities? Hath he not revealed his wrath from Heaven against the ungodliness of Men? Doth not his Providence frown dreadfully? Hath he not in legible Characters written his high displeasure in those temporal Judgments that are among us? What else means his not going forth with our Armies, the unsuccessfulness of our Fleet, the taking of our Merchants Ships, the loss of our Trade, the scarcity of Corn, the dearness of all Provisions, so that Poverty comes in upon us like an Armed Man? Let not Men grumble at these things, but lay them to heart, humble themselves, and reform, mourn, and amend their ways and doings.

Thirdly, You are Members of the Church, as well as Citizens of London, and Natives of England. Some of you are come into stricter

and closer Communion than others, in order to the better promoting of your Souls good, and your enjoyment of Ordinances purely administered, and, as you think, more according to the mind of God revealed in Scripture. However, all of you do profess yourselves belonging to the Church of Christ, and so to be Members of his Mystical Body; and you ought to study the good of the Church; if you do not, there is no life in you, but you are dead members, you may have some kind of being in the body, but you are not of it, you do not receive Spirits and Life from the Head, no vital influences. And Oh! How did Paul complain and groan, because men were wholly selfish, confined and shriveled up into a narrow interest, seeking their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ, i.e. the glory of his Name, and the good and prosperity of his Church, which is not a separate but a joint interest, so that the promoting of one, is the promoting both, and you ought to study it, and do all that you can to contribute to it.

Fourthly, Do not you know that a great many among us are the burdens of the Land, and that under them it groans? We see England is sick, yea. it is heart sick, oh! How faint it is, what convulsions hath it, what struggling's are there, even as for life, but who is it sick of? Of the Fanatics will some say, and I say so too, only understand it of them who are Fanatics indeed, not of them who are Israelites indeed; the Fools Cap is many times through a willful mistake put upon a Wise Mans head; but they will say, England is sick of the Dissenters, the Non-Conformists, and it will never be well till they be suppressed, and purged out; but those that are thus minded, go by very wrong measures, and are Physicians of no value. Ahab told Elijah that he troubled Israel, but the Holy Prophet did very justly and honestly return it upon the wicked King. I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy Fathers House, in that ye have forsaken the Commandments of the Lord, 1 Kings 18.18. And I dare also say,

concerning those good men, which some have given that undeserved name to, what in another case Paul said to the Centurion, and the Soldiers, except these abide in the Ship ye cannot be saved, Acts 27.31. I am not for making Parties, nor widening or continuing unnecessary differences, but desire to love everyone that loveth the Lord Jesus in sincerity; and I dare affirm, that those who are godly in the Nation are the strength thereof, the strength both of King, and Kingdom, Isa. 6.13, the holy seed shall be the substance thereof. But I was saying, too many are the burden of the Land, I mean, those that have sucked in, and do belch out damnable Doctrines, and the Profane Crew, the Debauchees of the Age, the Land is sick of them, and perhaps will not be well 'till it hath eased itself, I say not of their Persons, but of their Principles and Practices; those, those be the Persons that are the Pests and Plagues of the Nation, and may they be so accounted, in order to their being avoided, that so the spreading of the infection may be prevented? But since there are such as these, multitudes of them, you that profess Religion, should desire, and pray, and labor to be the blessings of the Nation, and so to be, will be your honor.

Fifthly, To fill up the places in which God hath been pleased to set you, is the way to make you blessings, public blessings; the way for the whole to thrive, is for everyone to do his part; when the Spring, Wheels, and Ballance move regularly, the Watch goes well, there is the honor of the place, and the profit of the place, and those that are high will expect that; but there is also the work of the place, and let them and others also do that. It may be thou art but in a low and mean place, however, be thou contented with the disposal of Providence, that is the way to have a blessing from God for thyself, and to be thyself a blessing to the Nation. Consider then the place in which you are set, and study the duty of that place, and to that do thou apply thyself, and labor to do it all. Are any of you in public

place in City or Country, clothed with Authority and Power, in a capacity of encouraging Virtue and Godliness, and of punishing and suppressing Vice, fill up your Place, it is pity there should be any Wicked, Profane, Idle, Careless Slothful Magistrates, they are common Nuisances. Have you none but a little Cock-Boat to manage? Being only Governors of Families, do you fill up your place, and do the duty of that. If you have but a little, it is the more easily done, be you faithful in your little, that is the way to advance, God may make you Rulers over much, to be sure you shall not miss of his joy.

Sixthly, Families are the first Bodies out of which greater Societies and Communities do arise, and of which they are composed. Churches, Towns, Cities, Kingdoms are made up of Families, as the integrating parts the least Families is a part of the body, a Family is the first Society, as it was in our Primitive Parents Adam and Eve, and in its growth an increase it comes to be made up of several Persons, that stand in several Relations to one another, Husband, Wife, Son, Daughter, Man-Servant, Maid-Servant, Villages, Towns, Cities, Countries are all of them made up, as was said before, of several Families; and according as it is in these smaller bodies, it is like to be in those greater ones; if the several members be corrupt, it is utterly impossible that the body should be sound. If there be a Plague raging in the Houses, it is impossible there should be health in the City. And so if Families be tainted, corrupted, spoiled, who can rationally think that the Kingdom should be good? Those larger and more numerous Societies which have been spoken of, may not unfitly be compared to Orchards, or Vineyards that should bring forth Fruit to God, and ought to be watered with the Magistrates eye, and watered by the Ministers hand; our Families are the Nurseries in which young tender Plants are set and Nursed, and reared for the supplying and furnishing them afresh, as the Old Stock, the Super-

annuated Trees of Righteousness do decay and wear off. Now if the Nurseries be not minded, if the young Plants there be not carefully and duly tended, what will become of the Orchard and Vineyard in a little while? From hence we may, not without good reason, conclude that private Family-care is necessary for the promoting of public and common good. Therefore I beseech you to look to your Nurseries, take care of your Families.

Seventhly, I would ask not only those that are truly gracious, but likewise them that are sober and serious, are you not ashamed of and troubled at those crying Abominations that are among us? Can Foreigners that come hither, and understand what is pure Religion, and undefiled before God, even the Father, and do observe the Miscarriages of Men; I say, can they look upon this as Immanuel 's Land, when they see it so over-run with Weeds, Briars and Thorns, can they think it to be the Garden of the Lord, or rather some of the Wilderness of the World, some of the Devils waste? Might not Heathens and Pagans say, they are become like some of us, yea, and worse than many of us? The good Lord look upon us in mercy, and doth it not affect and afflict you, that it is thus, after all the Gospel-Light that hath shined among us, and after all the means that God hath used for our Reformation, in a mixed way of Mercy and Judgment, of Kindness, and Severity.

I do very well know, there are almost everywhere great complaints of Profaneness and Debauchery, and truly those complaints are not without great cause; for Sin, gross Wickedness doth abound in all places, both in City and Country, if the Court be free I shall rejoice, there are bad reports of Camp, and Fleet, Wickedness hath broken in like a flood, as if it would deluge us, and prevail against all Piety, yea, and against all Morality too, filling all places with Atheism, and Brutishness, and without doubt, Men in High Places did draw up the

Flood-gates, for the furthering an Antichristian design, Popery and Profaneness are near a kin, let men have a liberty to do what they will, i.e. to commit all uncleanness with greediness, and an hundred to one they will be content that those who are uppermost should choose their Religion for them; yea, and also inferior Magistrates and under Officers have paved its way. Blessed be they of the Lord, who have offered themselves willingly to give a check and stop to it; and blessed be those Magistrates, who encourage and assist them therein; and Oh! That the work may prosper in their hands; but in the meantime, have not you private Men had an hand in it? You do cry out against Public Houses, Taverns, and Alehouses, and as I hear, so I believe, not without much cause, though some of them are in good hands, and care is taken that good Orders be observed in them, yet certainly the wickedness of others, yea, of many others is exceeding great; they are the Devil's ground, in which he sets his Nets and lays his Snares for the catching of his unwary Prey, they are the Devils School, in which Men follow his Trade, and by both together young ones are taught it; there it is that modesty is put off, and sober Principles plucked up by the Roots, and they learn the Mysteries of iniquity, and commence Masters of that Black Art. But you who do complain of these Public-Houses, look home, lay your hands upon your hearts, and ask your own Consciences what you have done, and what you have left undone. Is there not the neglect of God, and the duties of Godliness in your houses, there is no Drunkenness, nor Whoredom, no Cursing and Swearing that you do allow, that is well, but withal, there is no Praying, nor Reading the Scripture, nothing of the Service and Worship of God there; and by that means you do not as you ought, Principle your young ones against the Vices of the Times, and so you leave them too naked and open to the assaults of Temptation. This I would have impressed upon your thoughts, that the making of good Families, is the way to make a good City, and a good Kingdom. Let everyone make it his

business to set up Religion at home, and then we shall all be sure to find it when we go abroad. If all our Families were good, we should have good Princes, and good Parliaments, good Magistrates, and good Ministers, and good People; good Husbands, Wives and Children, good Friends, and Neighbors, it would indeed be Aurea Aetas, a Golden Age.

Eighthly and lastly; The conscientious performance of Religious duties in Families, is an excellent means for the rendering of Public Ordinances more successful. I am persuaded, there would much more good come of that precious Seed which the faithful Ministers of Christ scatter in their several Congregations, were Masters and Mistresses of Families careful before they come to prepare the Soil for the Seed, and after it is sown, careful to cover it with Prayer, and to water it with suitable discourses and exhortations.

Thorough the Divine Goodness and Bounty there is in this City, and near it, a great deal of excellent Preaching. Confident I am, no Place in the World can show such plenty. Heavenly Manna doth abundantly fall about our Tents. Whatsoever there is of a scarcity as to Bread for the Body, there is no Famine here (oh that in every poor Country there were none neither!) of hearing the Word of the Lord. We have it upon the Lord's Day, and the week days too, every day in the week one where or other within your reach; blessed be God for it, the joyful sound is continually in our Ears. It would be a thousand pities, that such admirable plenty of a thing so precious as the Everlasting Gospel should do any hurt, and that any should wax wanton, and instead of the Bread of Life, be hankering after Mushrooms and Kickshaws, or that they should grow nice and curious, not relishing plain Truths, and the Simplicity of the Gospel, unless it be dressed and sauced to their humor, and served up to them in words which Man's Wisdom teacheth. Though I fear we have



among us too many of that mind, mark, how they live, and what becomes of them; but be that how it will, it must be granted, that this place where God hath cast our Lines, is a Goshen, a Valley of Vision, and a great many People are much, very much for hearing of Sermons; they run up and down to Lectures, and some of them will hear four Sermons, and much good may they do them: It is a great encouragement to the Servants of God, and a ground of hope that they shall catch some of them for their Master. He hath made them Fishers of Men, and the Fisher-men love to cast their Net where there is a great Shoal. But I would say to these who do so much frequent Sermons, two things.

First; By way of Advice; Look to your whole Duty; and labor to stand complete in all the Will of God. Hearing is not the whole work of a Christian. The Scripture indeed saith, Hear and your Souls shall live; but if you would live, you must do something more than hear. Your much hearing is a sign of a good Appetite; but there are some Bodies that have a caninum Appetitum, a greedy, ravenous Appetite, and yet are mere Skeletons, nothing but Skin and Bone: You that have so great an Appetite, will do well to look to it that you also have a good Concoction. Under the Law those Beasts were by God declared clean that did chew the Cud. Hear, and then ruminate; do not only let Truths come crowding into your Ears, for then one may thrust out another, but ponder them in your hearts, as Mary the Mother of our Lord did, and hide them there as David did. You should spend some considerable time in meditation, that so, what Truths you have heard you may chafe in and work upon your hearts.

Secondly; I would speak unto you by way of Question, thus; When you spend all your time in hearing abroad, what is done at home? Where are Family-duties? Who is it that prays there? Who teaches and catechizes the young ones there? Know, O Soul! No good thing,

is thy duty out of season? Nor art thou to prog for thyself by robbing thy house: And know this also, we that are Preachers of the Gospel, have but little hope of doing much good upon your Children and Servants by our Labors in the Church, if you who are Governors over them, and have the power, will be careless and negligent, and do nothing at home: How can we think that they will follow our counsels, when you will not second them? Alas! Their weak leaking Memories let them slip, and their corrupt Natures reject them. There had need be Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Line upon Line, here a little and there a little; and all little enough, yea and all too little, unless accompanied and set home by the All-conquering Power of the Eternal Spirit. God indeed can do his work alone, needs neither you nor us; but as he did by his own Word without Means and Instruments, call the World out of nothing, and raise Lazarus out of his Grave; so he can by the same Power, in the same Way convert most obstinate Sinners, and turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the Just, or if he please to make use of Ministers for that end; he can make them prosperous. He honors us by employing us, and if he will doubly honor us, by making us successful, no difficulty shall be insuperable, no opposition an impediment; great Mountains in our way shall sink into Plains, and Iron-Gates shall be opened. His concurrence is enough alone; through God the Weapons of our Warfare will become mighty, so that strong holds shall be demolished, and imaginations cast down, carnal reasonings silenced and subdued, together with those high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, and every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; 2 Cor. 10.4. And therefore though some, though many of you stand idle with your hands in your bosoms, we will into the Vineyard, and follow our business as long as we have any, being sure our Labor shall not be in vain, something will come of it. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall we be glorious. But, as Paul said in another case; Phil. 4.17. We

desire fruit that may abound to your account, and to the account of yours, even the Salvation of you all, the Conversion of the Youths, and from thence Comfort to the Parents. And as we love our work, so we would do it with delight, and we shall do so when you set your hands to it, because when all hands are at work, we may the more hope that God will work together with us, and that his Spirit and Blessing shall accompany our joint-endeavors; and while we prophesy upon dry Bones, he will cause breath to enter into them, so that they shall live. Up, therefore, I beseech you, up and be doing; come ye forth to the help of the Lord and of his Servants against that gross Darkness, those corrupt Principles that are in the Minds of Young ones, and those potent Lusts that are in their Hearts. Do you teach as well as we, that they may know the Lord; do you back our wholesome and holy Counsels, that they may follow them. And while the Masters of the Assemblies come with their Nails of Truth which were given by one Shepherd, even Jesus Christ, who is the great Shepherd of the Sheep, and take much pains for the driving of them home; in order to the uniting them to God by Faith, and to one another by Love; do you, who are Parents and Governors, come with your Hammers, and do what you can toward the fastening of them?

I am now at length come to the end of this discourse, wherein I undertook to prove, That setting up the Worship and Service of God in our Families, is no other than our reasonable service. Whether I have performed what I undertook, you will judge, and what evidence there is in the proof; if I do not mistake, you will find it clear and full. And now, my dear Friends, may I hope, I am indeed very willing to hope, and I shall be exceeding glad to hear, that by all these pains that I have taken, and all these Arguments which I have used, some of you, who have been altogether strangers to this work hitherto, and lived in the total neglect thereof, have been persuaded the doing thereof is without question your duty; and that therefore it is your

present, yea your fixed Resolution through the Grace and Assistance of God to set upon the doing of it. And that since you are convinced and satisfied about it in your Judgments, and your own Consciences do vote and plead for it, you will take it into your practice. The good Lord grant it may be so. And I bless his Name, I do hear something to that purpose, and that these Labors have not been in vain; oh! That I might hear more and more, that so my Joy both in the Lord and in you might be increased.

Will you begin this Evening, I say, this Evening, for delays in Soul-matters are by no means to be allowed. Whatsoever is Duty ought to be done, and if it ought to be done, why not presently? Possibly you think afterward will be soon enough, but God is not of your mind. He saith in Psal. 95. Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; and when God saith, today, what art thou that thou shouldst say, tomorrow? Come, my Friends, that sooner the better. Hath not the great Majesty of Heaven waited long enough upon you for his Service and Honor? Oh do not make him wait any longer! It is a dangerous thing to abuse Mercy, and tire out Divine Patience. Woe be to that Man, concerning whom God saith, My Spirit shall no more strive with him, and my Patience shall no longer wait upon him. Do not therefore in this or the like case consult with flesh and blood; make not carnal Reason your Counselor; listen not to Objections, though never so seemingly fair and plausible, for there is no sufficient Argument to be brought against anything which really is a matter of Duty, whether you owe it to God or Man.

All this while I have been speaking to you altogether in generals, but now I shall descend to particulars, and here with all the earnestness that I possibly can use, I shall exhort you to these three things, and give you some Directions for your help in the doing of them.

1. To pray with your Families.
2. To teach and instruct your Families.
3. To set them a good Example in your own Lives and Conversations in order to the keeping or banishing sin and profaneness out of them, together with the promoting of Morality and Godliness in them.

I shall begin with the great Duty of Family-prayer, and oh! That I might through the Grace of God persuade you all into the practice of it! Oh, that from this very day there may not be found one prayerless Family among you! For I do not doubt to affirm, that which is a prayerless Family, is also a graceless Family. Where there is no seeking of God, there is no love to him, no fear of him. And that Family which is void of the Grace of God, is without his Blessing; and though there may be outward Plenty and Grandeur in it, and the Sun of worldly Prosperity may shine upon it, yet it stands open and exposed to the Wrath and Indignation of God, who is, and cannot but be angry with it every day, seeing himself slighted and neglected by his own Creatures who live upon him, and receive their All from him. And there is standing upon Record in the Sacred Scriptures, a dreadful Prayer against those Families which do not pray; let those that are guilty read it and tremble; for as it was indicted by the Spirit of God, so it shall be fulfilled by the Justice of God; Jer. 10.25. Pour out thy Fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the Families that call not upon thy Name. The Families that do not call upon God's Name, do not know him; for as those that know his Name will put their trust in him, so they will seek him; and they may very well be reckoned Heathen-Families, though they are Christian by a verbal Profession. Christians in Name, but Heathens in practice; and over these Families there hangs a great black Cloud of Divine Vengeance, which at one time or another will disgorge and empty

itself upon them; there shall not only be some little small drops of Anger, but the pouring out of Fury; and methinks danger should be enough to drive you to Duty; though he is not ingenuous, not of a right temper who is moved by no other consideration. I would have you walk with God, and in the way of your Duty, not for wrath only or chiefly, but for Conscience sake; not only that you might avoid being bound in Chains of Wrath, but because you are allured and drawn with the cords of kindness. Though we may, and should use all the Arguments we can muster, and those of all sorts for the persuading of our dull and heavy hearts, that are so backward unto that which is spiritually good; to that end therefore consider, you have Family-sins, and therefore ought to join together in your confessing of them, mourning over them, and humbling yourselves before God for them; and you have Family-sorrows and afflictions, and therefore should be joint-suitors to God both for the sanctifying of them to you, and for the removal of them from you; and you have Family-mercies in which you do all share, and of which you taste the sweetness, and therefore you should all bear your parts in a Song of Praise, and cheerfully join together in your acknowledgments of them, and thankful returns to the God that gives them. And withal, be sure of this, that if you do exclude Family-prayer, you shut out God himself, and at the same time you open the door to the Devil, and let in together with him a crowd of sins, and, by consequence of mischiefs. Therefore I beseech you mind and resolve upon the great and excellent work of Family-prayer, yea, and make Conscience of performing it. And in order to the better management thereof, I shall give you these following Directions, which I desire you to observe, and the good Lord grant you a heart to follow them.

I. Live in the performance of Secret Prayer. When you are in your Retirements, be upon the ascent, when you are alone, be with God. You that are Parents and Masters of Families, do this yourselves, and

heartily commend it to all under your care, your Servants and your Children which are in a capacity of doing it, which you will not find to be any detriment or loss to you. For this you have an express Command from our dearest Lord Jesus Christ; Matth. 6.6. Thou, when thou prayest enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which seeth in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret will reward thee openly. He doth not here take you off from praying with others, but he puts you on praying by yourselves; that is not to be neglected, and this is to be done; therefore do you allow them time for it who are under your roof. Let the Husband pray by himself, and the Wife by herself, the Children apart, and the Servants apart. It was a dreadful thing when in the 8th of Ezekiel the Lord in a Vision carried the Prophet from place to place, and in them all he showed him abominations; in one place there was the Image of Jealousy, in another place the form of creeping things, Beasts, and all the Idols of the House of Israel portrayed upon the Wall; in a third place Women weeping for Tammuz; and in a fourth place there were others worshipping the Sun toward the East. Idolatry was committed in all those places; hereupon God threatens to dwell with them in Fury. But how sweet will it be, when God looks into your houses, and sees the Husband praying in one room, and the Wife in another, a Child upon his knees pouring its supplications out before him here, and a Servant doing it there; this is the way to have him dwell with you in mercy, and according to the exceeding riches of his Grace.

I desire you that are Servants, to redeem some time for this work, though you have enough to do, your heads, and hearts, and hands full, yet get some minutes for this; for so you may comfortably expect, that when you are about the business of your Calling, God will strengthen you the more for it, and bless you the better. Wrest some time out of the hand of sleep. Wrestling with God is better than an idle slothful lazying. It is a thousand times better to break thy

natural Rest, than to lose thy Duty. One quarter of an hours hearty, fervent, and believing Prayer, will more revive thy spirits, and be a far greater refreshing to thy Soul, than an hours drowsing, and render thee more lively, more good, more comfort is to be got upon thy knees, than upon the pillow; therefore rouse up thyself, awake thy Soul and Body, and say with David; Psal. 61.1. O God my God! Early will I seek thee. Get up, get up the sooner in the Morning, take unto thee the wings of the Morning, and flee away, that so thou mayest get up to thy God and be with him. Let me mention two things by way of Motive.

First; The sweetness that is in Secret Prayer. You Christians that have tasted it, make your reports, and commend it to your Friends and Acquaintance, tell them what you have found. David would not conceal the Loving-kindness of his God, but invited others to come and hear what had been done for his Soul; so to do argues a thankful spirit, and in this very particular many of you may find abundant matter to enlarge upon; for it is no jejune barren Subject. It is a most pleasant Converse that a gracious Soul hath when it is alone with God; O the intimacy and closeness of that Communion which it enjoys when there is nobody else by! O the humble familiarity and holy freedom that it can at such a time use! The Prophet said; Psal. 39.1. He would keep his mouth with a Bridle while the wicked was before him. Yea and Prudence will tell the Saints, there is a necessity for their doing so when the Saints are before them, and their dearest Friends; they are forced to suppress many things, there are such black thoughts in their minds, such stirrings and workings of corruption in their Heart as are not fit to be imparted unto any upon Earth. So that though their Hearts are ready to burst, they cannot ease themselves by giving vent, but when they are got alone, and nobody hears but their Father which is in Heaven, they know how to pour out their complaints into his Bosom, and open their case,



though with shame and blushing, because it is so bad, and fetch things up from the bottom, and tell God all that is in their Hearts, Psal. 38.9. Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.

Secondly; There is great advantage comes in by secret Prayer. As sweetness in it, so good by it, and that in this respect, as it is a means to fit a Person for praying with others; when thou hast been upon thy knees with God in thy Closet, thou mayest comfortably hope that thou shalt find him graciously accompanying thee into thy Family, and there helping thine infirmities by giving thee a larger measure of the Spirit of Grace and Supplication for thy better enablement to manage and go through with thy Duty there. When Scholars at the University have a Speech to make in the College or Schools, they will say it over by themselves first. Chase thy own Soul in thy Retirements, that so thou mayest be warm and warm others in thy Family. Now in the performance of your private Devotion I commend to you a holy freedom, and that in these two things.

First; Be very ingenuous in your Confession of sin; this is one great special piece of your Duty. It is a singular way of giving glory to God, and of easing a burdened, oppressed Conscience. When therefore you go about it do it thoroughly; confess thy sins with shame, but be not ashamed to confess them; he that covers his sin shall not prosper, no, not in that, not in his covering them, for what he covers God will reveal, who loves to bring to light the hidden things of dishonesty. There are two Reasons for a free and full confession of sin to God; the one is, Because it is in vain to keep back any, since he knows them all, for he searcheth the Heart, possesseth the Reins, understands the Thoughts afar off, compasseth the path, knoweth our down-sitting and up-rising, is better acquainted with us than we are with ourselves, having our secret Sins in the light of his

Countenance. The other Reason is, Because he is ready to forgive, and hath promised, whoso confesses and forsakes his sins shall find mercy, as much mercy in God as he finds sin in himself. Doth the penitent Confessor find crying sins in himself? He shall find tender mercies in God, yea, a multitude of them.

Secondly; Be large in thy desires. Let not modesty prevail against thy necessity, and hinder thee in thy begging, but open thy Mouth wide to ask as well as to receive. Consider you go to one that is a Fountain, never emptied by the streams it sends forth, to one that hath an inexhaustible Treasure, and doth not in the least impoverish or lessen himself by enriching of others. The Sun hath never the less light by shining upon the World, nor hath the Ocean less Water by feeding the Rivers. God is able to make thy Cup run over, and thy Cistern too; yet retain his own Divine Fulness, which can neither be more nor less than it is, because it is infinite. And as thou goest to such a Fulness, so to one that is thy Father. It might well discourage and damp thy Spirit hadst thou to deal with a Stranger, or only with a Friend, but it is thy Father to whom thou dost in Prayer address, such a Father as hath not his Fellow neither for Fulness nor Affection. Therefore when thou art in his Presence, and at his Foot speak out, and carry away no burden nor want which thou dost not acquaint him therewith; let him have as full an account of all from thine own Mouth as thou canst draw up, that is the way to have the removal of those burdens, and relief under those wants, and for thine encouragement frequently meditate upon those two Scriptures, Jam. 1.5. God giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and that in Phil. 4.19. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ.

II. Besides secret Prayer in your Closet or Chamber, make Conscience of Family-prayer. Having been alone with God, and by

thyself, sit not down content with that; but apply to the remaining part of thy Duty, call those that are under thy charge, and carry them to God together with thee. As when the woman of Samaria had heard the discourses of our Lord Jesus, while they were by themselves, she was so taken with them, that she left her Water-pot, and went to the City, and called her Neighbors to come and see him, and converse with him too. Would you not be willing to have your Family go to God in glory? Sure you would, and if so, then bring them now with you to God in duty: All that are capable of joining with you, and of understanding what you do and say; yea, bring your little ones, your young and tender Babes, so that they will be quiet, and give you no disturbance in the work, that so you may,

First; Present yourselves before the Lord, offering and dedicating them to him.

Secondly; Enter them early, and from the Cradle in his Service.

Thirdly; Beg a Blessing from God upon them, though they cannot beg one for themselves.

If you will consult the Scriptures, you will find that God's ancient People, the Jews, did bring sometimes their Children with them to the great Congregations. Take two instances of it, one of them you have in Deut. 29.10, 11. All Israel did appear before the Lord when Moses made a Covenant with them in the Land of Moab. Now read what Moses there said to them, Ye stand all of you this day before the Lord your God, your Captains of your Tribes, your Elders, and your Officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your Wives, and thy stranger that is in thy Camp, from the hewer of thy Wood, unto the drawer of thy Water. Not only the Males but the Females, not only the great and honorable Men but the meanest, not only the Fathers, but the Children, not only those that were grown up, but the

little ones were brought before the Lord, to enter into Covenant with him, and into the Oath which the Lord their God made with them that day.

So when in Ezra 9, the Princes came to that holy Man, and told him, the people of Israel, and the Priests and the Levites had not separated themselves from the people of the Lands, but taken their Daughters for themselves, and for their Sons also; so that the holy Seed had mingled themselves with the people of the Lands, the good Man upon the hearing thereof rent his Garment, and his Mantle, and plucked off the Hair of his Head, and of his Beard, and sat down astonied, at the Evening Sacrifice he fell upon his Knees, and spread out his Hands unto the Lord his God, blushing, and professing himself ashamed to lift up his Face to God, because of that great trespass which had been committed by the people, though he himself was not guilty of it. Now consult Ezra 10.1, and you find there, when he had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping, and casting himself down before the House of God, there assembled unto him a very great Congregation of men, and women, and children, for the people wept very sore. The poor Children were brought as Persons concerned, as those who were obnoxious to the stroke of Justice, and might perish in a common Calamity brought upon that sinning and God-provoking People. So that it was no childish thing in them to bring their Children with them to such serious and solemn work; there was much in it as might easily be shewn.

Now let these Examples prevail so far with you as to bring your Children with you to your Family-duties, there present them before the Lord; for though they can do nothing to the duty, yet you cannot tell what God may do upon and in them; he hath a way to their Hearts, and can do that good work in them which neither they nor you do know now, but both they and you may know it afterward.

Therefore though they cannot pray themselves, though they cannot understand what you say in your Prayers, yet let them be present at them; there they are under the Eye of God, and he may bestow upon them a look of love; they are in the way of mercy, and it may give them a visit; the Prayers you cause to ascend may gather into a Cloud over you, and when that pours down a shower of Blessings, some drops may fall upon your little ones.

And since you should bring your little ones to Prayer, it is plain that you ought to call those to it that are elder and grown up, and have attained to the use and exercise of their Reason, your Sons and your Daughters, your Man-servants and your Maid-servants, invite them to come in, call them, exhort them, show the goodness of it, the excellency and necessity of it, persuade them, draw them with the Cords of a Man; if they, or any of them be careless, refractory, obstinate, command them to come in, compel them to come in, use that power and authority with which God hath invested you. Do not suffer any of them to absent themselves from one Prayer without just cause. Let them not eat of your Bread, nor live under your Roof, who will not join with you in the service of your God. You have in this Discourse heard, and now read much concerning the noble and gracious Resolution taken up by that great and excellent Person Joshua in the Text, As for me and my house we will serve the Lord. I will do it, and they shall; I and all mine, my House, my whole House, every Individual Person in it. Let none serve you that will not serve your God as well as you. For mine own part, I never was a Friend to Impositions, and I think and hope never shall be: Not for Men's adding their Inventions to Divine Institutions, and then requiring all to submit and comply with them. Let themselves use them, yea, and all those that like them, only may they grant liberty to such as are otherwise minded, and count that worship best, most pleasing, most profitable, and most glorious, which is of God's own appointment.

But I am for requiring what God hath required; it is the duty of Magistrates in Nations, and of Governors in Houses to see that God's Laws be observed and obeyed; and therefore be you very careful in that respect, and strictly command all under you to be constantly present. If any of them will not let them know your displeasure, and that you will not endure it; whether they refuse to join with you out of a Spirit of Error, with which too many at this day are acted, or out of a Spirit of Profaneness, it is all one for that; if they will not with you seek and serve the Lord, let them not continue in your House, nor tarry in your sight; they are no other than Plagues in your Families, and may spread the Infection, others are in danger from them. They are rotten Members, cure them, or cut them off; bring all to Prayer.

III. Be sure to make Family-prayer the work of every day. God loves your Company, therefore be not strangers to him. He never thinks you come to him too often, why then should you go but seldom? Do not content yourselves with praying only upon the Lord's-day, and bringing all your service of God within the compass of a Sabbath, as if the other six days were so your own, and for your own work, that you must spare none of them for God. This indeed, as I have been informed, is the manner of some among us; upon a Lord's-day they will call their Families together, and then they will do something for God; but they must give me leave to think, what they do then is pitifully, shamefully done; they are so seldom used to it that they must needs bungle at it; and let me ask you, my Friends, are these Persons liberal to God? Nay, are they not very beggarly and penurious, who will give him a visit upon that day which he hath reserved wholly and entirely for himself, and set about it the Hedge of a command to keep all secular Affairs from intruding or breaking in upon it? But they will not part with any of that time which he hath allowed them for the dispatch of their own business; but their Work

and Recreations, their Eating, Drinking and Sleeping shall engross it all; in short, the Language of their practice is this, they will pray a little when they have nothing else to do, or when there is nothing else that they may do; but the Law commands them to shut up their Shops, and to lay by their worldly Trades, but, my Friends, is this fair? Do not you rob God of some of his time? Why then will you not return him some of your own? Do not you commit too many sins upon a Sabbath-day, and will you not do some duty upon a Weekday? Do you mingle sin with your holy things, and will you not mingle Prayer and holy Thoughts with your earthly things? Is this to continue instant in Prayer? Is this to pray without ceasing? Is this paying due homage to the Lord of your time and comforts? Is this enough for depending Creatures who cannot live a day without God, no, not a moment?

The truth is, Love to God should draw us frequently that we may have Communion with him, and necessity might drive us that we may have supplies from him; all your Springs are in him, with him is the Well of Life, therefore let down your Bucket of Prayer often, that you may draw Water with joy. You may observe that in the Lord's Prayer which Christ gave his Disciples for an excellent pattern or example by which we all should draw up ours, he teacheth us to say, Our Father, that speaks Communion, and a joining together in Prayer; one Saint, one Child of God may go alone to the Throne of Grace and say, Father. or, O my Father, but, Our Father, speaks Society and Fellowship in the duty: That there are more Suitors, more concerned than one. And further observe, that there our Lord bids us say, Give us this day our daily bread; from whence we may gather these three things.

First; He bids us pray for Bread. Temporal good things are to be sought of God. The Dew of Heaven, yea, and the Fatness of the Earth,

Provision for our Souls, and Food for our Bodies too; we are to seek God, and rely upon him in and for the greatest things, and also the least. In everything by Prayer and Supplication we are to make our Request known to God. We cannot get our Bread unless God gives it to us.

Secondly; He bids us pray for Bread, not for Dainties, not Sweetmeats, not Venison, not Varieties, Necessaries are to be sought, not Superfluities; nothing to feed our Pride, nor to spend upon our Lusts. Feed me, said wise and holy Agar, with food convenient for me; that which is suitable to the place in which thou hast set me. Seek not great things for yourselves, for those great things may prove great snares.

Thirdly; He bids us to say, Give us this day our daily Bread. We are to pray for Bread for today, supplies for today; and we are to say that, or something to the same purpose every day. He doth not bid us pray that God would give us Bread for this Week, or for this Month, or for this Year, or for twenty Years to come, but give us this day, and we are to say so tomorrow as well as today, and the day after that as well as tomorrow, and so it is to run thorough the whole course of Life. Every day we are to say, Give us this day, &c. that is, as we desire to have our Bread of God every day, we must ask it every day; daily Bread and daily Prayer must go together. God doth love to answer the occasions of his People, and to supply their wants; He giveth meat to them that fear him, because he is ever mindful of his Covenant, Psal. 3.5, but he stands upon his honor, and expects to be owned, and therefore said, he would be sought to by the House of Israel to do it for them,

I have read this Story of a Heathen, whose Name I cannot for the present call to mind, that when he had at any time passed a day



without doing some Act of Charity or Mercy, he would in the evening sit down bemoaning himself, and cry out, *perdidi diem*, I have lost a day. Truly it is so here; thou mayest at night with bitterness of Soul reflect upon that day which thou hast spent without Family-Prayer, and say, *perdidi diem*, I have lost a day; and he that knows the shortness, the uncertainty, the worth of time, and how much depends upon the right improvement thereof, will reckon the loss of a day to be a very great loss, and we are wont to say, one loss seldom goes alone; what thou dost lose besides that, God only knows; what communion with God, what answers, what manifestations of Divine Love, what communications of Grace, what Blessings, therefore I beseech you all to make Conscience of Praying in your Families every day.

And if at any time, through forgetfulness or surprise of any kind, or being oppressed with business crowding in upon thee, thou art so hindered that thou canst not perform thy duty, but the Season is as it were violently wrested out of thy hands; bewail the loss, sigh and mourn over it, let God see thou art afflicted for it, and not pleased with thyself, or the avocation; and long for another opportunity, in which thou mayest go and appear before thy God; and when once it comes, welcome it with gladness, and lay hold upon it, thy Soul being like the Chariots of Amminadib, and then confess thy former omission, and beg thy Father to cast the Mantle of his love over it, and then double thy diligence, and thy heat, then spend the more time, and put forth the greater strength, then do thou follow the harder after God, and keep the closer to him, and let it be thy desire to make up that which was lacking before, that so neither thy God may lose his honor, nor thyself, nor thy Family the good and benefit of a duty; but like the Sea, what Religion loseth at one time, it may gain at another.

IV. Be sure that you Pray in your Families Morning, and Evening. I would not have you from hence conclude my design is to render you so strait laced as not to pray oftener than so, to do this, and take up with doing it, making that your stint, your allowance, resolved not to exceed; no, no, it is your interest to study liberal things in your dealings with God, for by liberal things you shall stand; you cannot be too much with God, nor do too much for him? You cannot pray too much, so that you have a prudent and cordial respect to all his Commands, and to all the parts of your Duty, not suffering one to justle out another; as the Body is not all one Member, so Religion is not all one Duty, it doth not consist altogether in Prayer, nor altogether in Hearing; and as that is a lame Body which wants one Member, so he is a lame Christian that is careless as to any one piece of Religion, such a willful defect is a great deformity. Set your hand to all the work of God, and in particular be much in Prayer; David gave himself unto Prayer, as a Man much set for it, and devoted to it; Daniel the Man greatly beloved of his God, was at it three times in a day, Dan. 6.10. His Windows being opened in his Chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times in a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did afore-time. He loved Prayer so well, that neither danger nor death, no, not a violent death, being cast into a Den of Lions could affright and deter him from it. David, the Man after God's own heart, was much more at it, Psalm 119.164. Surely he had great encouragement so to do from his experience, he sensibly felt that it very greatly tended to his advantage, he saw begging was a good trade, he did thrive upon it, and therefore he followed it close, the oftener he went to God, the more he got from him, and of him; he never rose off his knees, nor returned from the Throne of Grace without an Alms. The most Praying Christian, is certainly the most growing Christian, as he hath his expectations, I will direct my Prayer unto thee, and will look up; so he hath his answers, and sees something is coming; but let the

Morning and Evening of every day be your stated and set times for Prayer, there is a great deal of reason for that, viz.

First, The Divine Order and Appointment, of this we did before take notice; in Exod. 29. God required there should be two Lambs offered up every day in Sacrifice, the one in the morning, and the other in the Evening, which was called the continual Burnt-Offering; and shall we be exceeded and outdone by them? Shall the dispensation now be more glorious, and shall we be more penurious that live under it? Shall God now more magnify his grace, and shall we grow poorer in our returns? Their Sacrifices were more costly and chargeable, and shall ours be fewer? Surely since in the times of Messiah there is a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit, there should at least be an equal abounding in the work of the Lord; our Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise, the Calves of the Lips, and the lifting up of our Hearts and hands to God, should be as frequent as those bloody Sacrifices.

Secondly, This Practice is commended to us in the Scripture, we are directed to think upon those things that are of good report. Now this hath obtained a good report in the World, and as it is with Men, so it is with things, to be well spoken of by the word, is more than to have all the World speak well of one; look then into the 92nd Psalm 1st v. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing Praises to thy Name, O thou most High; to bless God, to exalt God, to give him glory, is good, it is duty, it is the employment of Angels, the Work of Heaven, and Eternity, and those that have good hearts will delight in good work. If you would know what are the fittest and most convenient times for the doing of this good work, for that tends much to the adorning and setting off a work, everything being beautiful in its season. He tells you in the next words, to show forth thy loving kindness in the Morning, and thy faithfulness every night; and when

we do in the sincerity of our Souls thus begin and end our days, we are like to find them good throughout.

Thirdly, God visits us every Morning, it is no less than God's humbling himself to behold those things which are above, the glorious Angels, much more to look upon Man, sorry dust, what is it then for God to visit him? The Prophet admired it, Psal. 8.4. What is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him? Great Princes are not wont to go into a Beggars Hovel, they reckon it below them, but the Great God stoops much lower; and Oh! How necessary is this for us, Job 10.12. Thy Visitation hath preserved my Spirit. By this he meant a gracious Visitation, a Friendly one, this revived him, this preserved him, his Spirit, his Life, his Courage, his Comforts, all were upheld and maintained by the gracious visitations of God. Again, how frequent are these with us? How many gracious Visits doth God bestow upon his poor People? Job 7.18. Thou visitest him every morning, there is never a Morning that we miss him, as often as the Morning returns, God comes to visit us, yea, he is with us before we are up; and since God's visits are so frequent, shall ours be few? Shall he come to see us, and see to us, and shall not, we wait upon him? Shall the strangeness be on our side? Let us visit God every Morning, and pay him visit for visit, and let us be sure to carry our Family with us, for so we shall be the more welcome.

Fourthly, The continuation and constant succession of Mercies doth oblige to this, and call for it; God's Mercies are new every Morning upon us, and shall not our returns? Shall we not follow hard after him, and delight in our approaches to him, when he draws us with the Cords of a Man, yea, with loving-kindness; the very pouring out of his Name, which is as a precious Ointment, should make us love and run after him; Oh! Let the pouring out of his Grace and Mercy do

it. Day unto Day utters speech, and Night unto Night showeth knowledge, and one would think that when both Day and Night speak in the Language of Love, we should answer them, and not be silent. God soweth his Seed in the Morning, and in the Evening he withholdeth not his hand; and surely that Heart and House is a very barren Soil, and near unto a Curse, that doth not twice a day pay its acknowledgments to him.

Lastly, methinks there is not anyone who hath the use of reason, and believes a God, but hath a Monitor in his own bosom to prompt him to this, and not need a Minister in a Pulpit to press it upon him, or a Friend at his elbow to jog him, your own reason should and would direct you to it, if you did but consult and hearken to it. It is fit that we should make God the Alpha, and the Omega, the first and the last, for so he is, and therefore we ought to begin and end our day, and other things too with God: we cannot rationally expect to prosper, if we do not begin with him, and in case we do not end with him, our labor may be lost, and all that we have done may ravel out again. Our necessities would engage and spur us on to this. In the Morning we should seek him for direction, assistance, and blessing upon the work and business of the day. For Direction, else we shall mistake our way, and lose ourselves, it not being in him that walketh to direct his steps; he that thinks himself wise enough to be his own guide, will find himself a Fool for thinking so. For assistance, because in him we live, and move, and have our being, and without him we can do nothing; nothing supernatural, nothing natural, the concurrence of his grace is necessary to all our Spiritual and holy actions: the concurrence of his providence is as necessary to all our natural and civil actions; if he subduct from us we cannot stir a finger, nor move a foot. And for a Blessing, for upon that all our success depends, we had as good sit still if we take not God along with us; Solomon tell us in one place, the diligent hand makes Rich; in another place, that the

blessing of the Lord makes Rich; the former can never do it without the latter. In the Evening we should beg of him Protection, for it is his hedge that secures us, his wing that covers us, Psal. 4.8. Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety, no Guard comparable to a God; beg of him rest and sleep, for it is he that with a tender hand closeth the eye, and binds up the senses, and giveth his beloved sleep, beg of him refreshing by that sleep, else you will have sick sleeps, and disordered Spirits, and aching heads after them. Once more, our daily receiving's do oblige us to the offering up of this our Morning and Evening Sacrifice. In the Morning we are in gratitude bound to bless him for watching over us while we slept, and that with a never-slumbering Eye, and for his not holding our Eyes waking, of which poor Asaph complained, Psal. 77.4. And that you are not in the same case with poor Job in Job 7.13, 14. Who, when he said, his bed should comfort him, and his couch should ease his complaint, was scared with dreams, and frighted with visions. We have cause to bless God in the Morning, that when we sought rest in our Beds we found it there, and that our sleep was not our terror. And again in the Evening we have cause to bless God for the help of the day, that he directed, and strengthened, and prospered us in the work of our Heads and Hands, and for the Mercies of the day, Health, Ease, Relations, Friends, Food, Raiment, and that we relish our Enjoyments, and taste any sweetness in our Enjoyments; for a little matter would vitiate and corrupt our Palates, and render our pleasant things as insipid and unsavory to us as the white of an Egg, or a dry Chip, nay, bitter and loathsome, Job 20.12. His meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. It is one thing to have outward Mercies, and another to have the comfort of them; and these two go not always together, but are often separated; when we have them both, surely we should be wickedly ungrateful if we do not own and honor him who is the Father of those Mercies, and the God of that Comfort.

V. For the better offering up of these your Morning and Evening Sacrifices in and with your Families, be sure to make choice of the fittest and most proper time. God doth all his works in their time, so should we do ours; that will be the Beauty of them. The blessed Man brings forth his Fruit in its Season, and that is lovely, pleasant Fruit. Now which is the most proper and convenient time for the Duty; I shall not take upon me here to determine, for the occasions and circumstances of Families are various and different, yea, and not seldom those of the same Family; wherefore the Governors of Families are to make use of their own Prudence and Discretion in the choice thereof; you are most likely to know it best, only do you choose that which is best; and I shall lay down two Rules in general by which you may judge what is so.

First; That is the best time for Prayer, in which you can promise yourselves the greatest freedom from all other business, and to meet with the fewest avocations from the work, and disturbances in it.

Secondly; That is the best time for Prayer, in which you find yourselves in the best composure; wherein your Minds and Hearts are in the fittest frame for the Duty, most serious, most spiritual, most lively, and have good reason to conclude, those who are to join with you in the work will be so too as well as yourself. This is highly desirable, and in a special manner to be looked to. A wise Man will see that his Instrument be in Tune before he will begin to play his Music. Do you here see to it that your Hearts be in Tune, otherwise you cannot hope that your Prayer will be God's delight. Now here I must be plain with you, that I may be faithful to you; and faithful I must be, because I am accountable, and how else shall I answer it to my Judge. I charge nobody in particular, that would not be becoming in such a place, in such an Assembly; but I draw my Bow at a venture, God himself direct the Arrow, that it may hit the mark, and

pierce to the Heart of those who are guilty. And I do advise every one of you to reflect and search into your own Lives, and examine your Practices, and if your Consciences smite you, and say as Nathan to David, Thou art the Man, Thou the Woman, take it to yourselves, and I give you free leave to think yourselves the persons whom I meant, and that was said I intended to and for you, only, know it for your good. The God of Heaven accompany what I shall say with his Spirit and Blessing, and lay it on the sore place, and make it stick in order to the working of a Cure. There are, my Friends, two things, of which I am informed, and upon their account there are great thoughts of Heart among serious gracious Christians.

One is that of unreasonable and unseasonable Gaming, I mean, in the houses of Professors, such as call themselves Christians, and would be counted the Friends and practicers of that Religion which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father; as for others who are the Servants of Sin and Satan, I leave them to the righteous Judgment of God. But, as I have heard since I entered upon this Subject, there is in the houses of Professors sitting up at Cards till it is late, ten, eleven, twelve of the Clock at night, yea sometimes till morning: I ask them by the way, whether ever they sat up so long at prayer, or reading the Scripture? Unto such persons I would only say these few things.

First; As touching the Game itself, I will not take upon me peremptorily to determine, that playing at Cards is utterly unlawful. Yet I do very well remember, that in former times when Professors lived more up to the Rules of Religion than most now do, and did not allow to themselves that latitude which many in our days take; Cards were counted so by many godly learned Ministers and gracious Christians, and accordingly were then called, The Devil's Books, and the use of them for play was a thing of bad report, and to have a pack



of them in the house was then reckoned scandalous. It is true, one of no small esteem for Learning and Piety (whose Name I forbear to mention) hath written for it; but I humbly conceive, he had better have spared his pains. So pitiful a Cause did not deserve so Learned a Pen, so great a Patron; and what he and others have said is not satisfactory, but still (*sub judice lis est*) the matter is disputable, and there are more against it than for it. And I am sure in matters questionable, such things as will admit of a debate, it is the wisdom of those who love their own Souls, and desire to approve themselves unto God by a holy exact walking before him, to forbear; there may be sin in using, but for certain there is no danger in letting them alone. Though you are not sure there is Poison in a Glass of Wine, yet if you do suspect it you will not drink of it. Perhaps the company will jeer and laugh at you for your over-niceness, and let them till they be weary, better so, than to have your own Consciences raging and storming at you for your over-boldness. It is not good to rouse a sleepy Lion, a little matter will do it. But then,

Secondly; As to any other Game which is evidently lawful, and concerning which no dispute hath been raised among good men. Nature doth require, and God doth allow Recreations. The Bow that always stands bent will grow to be a Slug. And there are Recreations in themselves very innocent and harmless, that tend much to the health of the Body, and not to the detriment or prejudice of the Soul; yet even in these you must manage yourselves with wisdom, for otherwise you may sin in them. What the Apostle Paul saith of the Law; 1 Tim. 1.8. We know that the Law is good if a man use it lawfully. I may say in the present case, we know that Recreation is good if a man use it lawfully; but withal we know that the greatest danger of real sincere Christians lieth inter licita, among things lawful; and though the Recreations, which you use, are lawful in themselves, yet you may sin in the using of them, and that many

ways; particularly, in the using them out of season, and by being too long at them. Time is too precious a Jewel to be thrown away.

Thirdly; I desire you seriously to consider, whether Gaming be a good preparative for any holy duty. We have been wont to blame those that would upon the Lord's-day come reeking out of their Beds to Public Ordinances; and if I be not mistaken, they are as worthy of blame, who immediately go from their sports to the Service of God. Is this, my Friends, is this the way for People to get themselves into a fitness for duty, their hearts into a serious, solemn, spiritual and holy frame? Is this the way to qualify you for an appearance in so great and glorious a Presence as is that of God, and for engaging to so important and momentous a work as is that of Prayer? You that love Recreations, do not love them too well; and you that use them, let it be without abusing them; do not make Play your work, but use it moderately, as becometh those who were sent hither for higher and nobler purposes than to sport upon Earth as Leviathan doth in the Sea; and as becomes them who knows the shortness, uncertainty and preciousness of Time, and that your everlasting welfare and happiness in the other World depends upon a due improvement of it; and as becomes those who believe you must at last render an account thereof unto the God that gave it to you. And I also advise you to take special care that there be a sufficient interval or space of time between your Recreation and your Duty, that so you may call your thoughts in which you had given leave to ramble, and raise your Affections up, which had been too much depressed, and sunk to Objects so mean and low, and that by holy Meditation, spiritual Divine Contemplations, you may recover your former warmth, and chafe yourselves into a due heat, and be fervent in spirit serving the Lord, remembering, it was in the flame of Manoah's Sacrifice that the Angel did wonderfully.

Fourthly; You that are Parents, I do earnestly desire you to think with yourselves, and that seriously, whether you are kind to your Children in playing at Cards; doth this speak your love to them, and care of them? Is this the way to keep them from the path of the Destroyer, and to bring them up for God? Doth this tend to the making of them gracious or serious? Do you think in your Consciences that you would be willing Death should come and find you so employed, that Death should come and take you at Cards? Or do you think in your Consciences, that you do herein set your Children a good Example. Really this deserves your thoughts; for as we Ministers are to be Examples to the Flock, so you Parents and Governors ought to be to your Families. What manner of persons then should you be in all holy conversation, in all the actions of your Lives? And are you so exemplary when you play at Cards, as it becomes and concerns you to be? Possibly, some of you think you have enough to say for yourselves, viz. that you do not make a Trade of it, nor a common practice, you do it but at one time of the year, when the Nights are long, and you know not how otherwise to pass away the time; but by the way, do not say so, for that proclaims your egregious weakness and folly) what! Have so great work to do, and so much of it, yet know not how to pass away the time? Or you satisfy yourselves with this, that you do not play for Money, at least not for much, so that upon that score you are much at a pass whether you win or not, and this may be, but you cannot tell what your Children may do after you; you do show them the way, and lead them in it, but they may shortly go a great deal farther than you yourselves either do or dare to do; because they see you play at Cards, they conclude it lawful, and that they may do so too, and accordingly do, for Children are imitating Creatures, and by practicing it, they may fall in love with it, for Childhood and youth are vanity, and by consequence very apt to follow after vanity, and in time they may come to love it so much, as to consume and spend their time in it, until their purses be

exhausted, their Estates dwindled and shrunk into nothing, and themselves with their Families reduced to beggary, and a morsel of bread, and at the same time their Souls are lost into the bargain; and surely rather than that should come to pass, it is a thousand thousand times more desirable that all the Cards in London, in England, yea in the World, should with just indignation be Sacrificed in the Flames. In short, as to this, I beg of you that you would do justly, in giving to God the things which are God's, and let not Cards nor any other game hinder his Work and Service, nor keep you from the performance of your Duty. Many have been undone by gaming, and thousands enriched by praying; it was by this means that Jacob as a Prince had power with God and Men, and did prevail. Oh! That so much may suffice to be spoken to that complaint, and Oh! That God would accompany it with his Spirit, and Blessing.

There is another thing which is indeed the matter of a general Complaint, and hath raised a great Cry that reached mine Ears, and the Ears of many of my Reverend Brethren; and that which renders it so much a Gravamen, so grievous and afflictive to our spirits, and those of other persons truly fearing God, and concerned for the Honor and Interest of our Religion, which deserves to be dearer to us than our Lives, is that it is the common, yea daily custom, not of the vile Debauchees of the Age, the wicked and profane Crew, from whom nothing is to be expected, that savors of goodness and sobriety, but even of sober Persons, grave Citizens, yea of Men eminent for their Profession, Members of Churches worshipping God in that way which so many unjustly labor to fix a black brand of Infamy upon; but our Heavenly Advocate will one day plead our Cause, and bring forth the Righteousness of it as the Light. But the thing is, such Persons sitting so long as they do, at Public houses of one kind or another, and spending there so much time, that it is nine, ten, yea and often eleven of the Clock at night, before they return to

their home; so deeply engaged are they in their Clubs, and Discourses, in telling and hearing of News. I bless God I very seldom hear of Professors and Members of Churches being charged with Drunkenness, Uncleaness, or other gross Immoralities, though I wish there were none of them guilty, and do fear there be some who are Spots in our Communion; yet this we can say, we allow them not, and if we did know them, and there were just proof, we should proceed against them according to Scripture-Rule. Further to prevent my being mistaken, I shall say these two things.

First; I do not speak against men's inquiring after News, or their being desirous to inform themselves concerning the State of Affairs, and how matters go in the Nation, and abroad, and with the Church of God, specially in such a time as this. When the Army of Israel went out to War against the Philistines, good old Eli could not stay at home, but out he went and sat upon a Seat by the ways side, watching, for his heart trembled for the Ark of God; 1 Sam. 4.13. And I look upon it as a duty, yea, a necessary part of duty in us all, that so we may be accordingly affected, and the better understand how to order our Spirits, and demean ourselves, and how to direct our Prayers and Praises unto God, that so there may be no unseemly discord and jarring between God's Providences and our Prayers, but a harmony and consent.

Secondly; I do not speak a word against Citizens having their Clubs, in order to the better and more prudent management of their Trades: this I am a stranger to and therefore do not meddle with; for anything I know it may be convenient for them, and profitable, and more than so, needful; but for Men to sit in those places so long, and keep from their own houses till it be so late, is indeed blame-worthy, and calls loudly for a reformation, and oh! That I could help toward

it, I will do my endeavor, and in order thereunto, offer some things to your consideration.

First, if any of you who are here present before the Lord, and are Husbands, be guilty of this thing, and make an ordinary practice thereof, I beseech you, when you are most calm and composed, seriously to reflect upon it, and think with yourselves, whether this be kindness to your Wives? Is this walking answerably to that near intimate conjugal relation into which you did voluntarily and of your own choice enter, promising to express all love and tenderness? Is this living up to the Law, and doing the duty of that Relation? Is this being as good as your word? Is this your love and kindness to her, in whose Company and Converse you ought to delight above all others except God's? Is this to be a Comfort to her as you ought to be? Think that while you are abroad Merry, Jocund, Pleasant, Delighting yourself with your Friends and Wine, she for want of you is at home Melancholic, Concerned, Afraid, Troubled lest you should Contract any Guilt, or come by any Hurt; at least, she is solitary and alone.

Secondly; To that thought add another, While I am here doth not my Family want me? May you not be more useful, and do much more good at Home, than you are capable of doing in one of those Public Houses? What becomes of your own Vineyard, which you are bound to keep? Would it not turn to a better account, and prove far more advantageous both to you and yours to be teaching of your Family, commending God and Godliness to them, giving them good Counsels, instilling into them sound Principles, reading to them yourselves, or hearing them read the Holy Scriptures, and other good Books, by which they may be richly furnished for good Works, and made wise to Salvation; or Catechizing them about the main Fundamental Points of Religion, and examining them as to their knowledge in the things of God, for want of due care wherein while

they are young, many when they come to be grown up, prove unstable Souls, and an easy prey to them that lie in wait to deceive. Possibly you do not, and I will hope that you do not Drink to Excess in those Houses, nor spend too much Money upon them, who will not thank you for it afterward; but what sayest thou Conscience? Speak out, to them, speak plain, do they not spend too much time there? May they not spend it much better at home, and about something else?

Thirdly; Suppose the great and holy God should come to you at such a time, and in such a place, would you not be startled at it, and afraid of him? When Elijah in danger of his Life upon the rage and threatening of Jezebel had fled and hid himself in a Cave, the Lord came to him and said, What dost thou here Elijah? 1 Kings 19. Suppose God should then and there come to thee, not in a great strong Wind, nor in an Earthquake, nor in a Fire, but in a gentle manner as he did to him, in a small still voice, and say, what dost thou here, O Man? Is it not high time for thee to be at home; honest Men should be so, specially such as call themselves by my name should be so, what then dost thou here? Could you give a satisfactory account of it unto God? Could you justify and maintain it before God? Could you with boldness answer, Lord, I am where I should be, I am where my work is; I do not at all doubt, but such a question as this propounded by the most holy God would raise a blush in your Cheeks for shame, or cover your Face with paleness for fear; it would leave you speechless, and make you tremble; it would cause rottenness to enter into your Bones, and teach you to make more haste home the next time. Well know, though God doth not appear and act to such a purpose as this for the present, yet if you do not amend, and sue out your Pardon, he will question you about it at the last, and punish you for it too.

Fourthly; When you come so late to your Houses, do you in your Consciences think that you come soon enough to your duty? Is so late at Night the best time you can pick out to bestow upon God? It is more than probable that then you yourselves are not in any fit condition to make your appearance before so glorious a Majesty, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and very sensible of his Creatures neglecting him, and who will not be mocked, no, nor slighted neither. Surely you are not then in a fit case to present your Petition to him, in whose Hand your Souls and Lives, and All are; you are not then in a fit case to strive in Prayer, and wrestle with Omnipotency; though indeed the Door of Grace doth stand always open, yet your Souls are not always active, and at that time your Bodies will be a clog and hindrance to them. At that Hour, not only your Hearts, it may be, are down, and flat, and dead, and your Spirits run very low, but your very Heads are discomposed too, and out of order; and it is not likely that Grace should be lively and vigorous in its motions, when Nature itself is jaded, tired, and calls for relief. But how do you think it is with the rest of the Family, who have stood in your Shops till their Legs have ached, and been spent and wearied with the toil and labor of the day, doing your work, and running from one end of the Town to another upon your Errands, and after all have been impatiently waiting, and wishing, and looking for you till they could look no longer, not being able to hold up their Eyes; for though the Spirit be never so willing, yet the Flesh is weak. Now I appeal to you, is this a good Praying-time? And are not all in a right praying case when in such a case as this? And the work is like to be done as it should be when they that set about it scarce know what they do, possibly they are all asleep as soon as ever they are fallen down upon their Knees, or if not so soon, before the Master hath done, and the Prayer is ended? O Great God how art thou served by these pitiful Wretches that owe thee more than they are worth! How would they put thee off! Wert thou not what thou art, God, and not Man, and



were not thy Goodness, thy Patience like thy Self Infinite? Thou wouldst not, nay more, thou couldst not bear it; and I leave you to think, whether you have reason to hope that he will accept. In short, by this means at sometimes the duty is totally omitted, and then they are sent to Bed as Swine to their Sties; at other times it is slightly and shamefully performed, and so there is short-praying, and sleepy praying, and dead, heartless praying, and indeed no praying; for we have reason to be confident that God will not call that praying, but a trifling and fooling, not a seeking, but a mocking of him. If this be your Incense that you offer to him it must needs stink in his Nostrils, and it is no wonder that he counts and calls it an abomination; this is no other than offering unto him the Blind and the Lame for a Sacrifice, and he may speak to you in the very same words that he used to those wicked Persons, Mal. 1.8. If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Is it not evil? Yes it is; if it be not evil in your Eyes, it is in mine, and evil in itself, and would be counted so by a Man thy Superior, therefore he thus goes on, Offer it now unto thy Governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy Person, saith the Lord of Hosts? You see what pains I have taken about this one thing; shall I entreat and prevail with you to consider and lay to heart what hath been said, and if there be reason, of which I do not doubt, be ruled by it. And if any that have heard me this day be guilty herein, let them humble themselves before God, and implore his Pardon, and let them be sure to reform this great abuse. Go home, and sin no more, do so no more, the time past may suffice.

VI. I do advise that you would neither in your Closets, nor in your Families confine and tie up yourselves to a form of Prayer. I would do everything that I do for good, would both speak and write to the advantage and edification of others, and not willingly anger the Wasp, much less offend any of Christ's little ones; therefore that I

may, as far as in me lies, have peace with all Men, and above, and within too; I say,

First; I do not wholly condemn a form of Prayer. I do not deny the lawfulness of it; nor would I for a World charge any Man with sin for making use of one, so that he do but pray with his Heart also. It is far better to pray with a form than not to pray at all, better to go to God with a good Prayer composed by another, than with his own nonsense. And I also add, That a form of Prayer is not only lawful but necessary tool for some, namely, those that know not how to pray without one; Those who (as Learned Mr. Tho. Fuller saith) have not yet attained, what all should endeavor, to pray ex tempore by the Spirit, for them a form of Prayer is as necessary as a Crutch is for a lame Man. And I do not doubt but such an one may have sweet Communion with God, and find welcome and a gracious Entertainment, so that he be upright in his Heart, and fervent in his Spirit while serving of the Lord, or to use the expression of the same worthy Person, Though a Man hath not change of Raiment, and cannot appear at the Court of Heaven every day in a new Suit, but comes in the same Clothes, yet if he be a Loyal Subject, he shall have free access to the King of Glory; if he be a Child Heaven-born, his Fathers Ear will be open to him, and his Petition received and granted; but while he goes to God with his old Prayer, let him labor to carry with him new affections. But,

Secondly; I must needs profess, to the Imposition of a form of a Prayer I am no Friend. I have been pleased with the Composure of several, for the spiritualness and variety of the Matter, and for the aptness of the Expression, but do not like the imposing of them; neither some Men's taking upon them to impose them on others, nor that any Man should impose one upon himself; and I am sure it is not from a Spirit of Error, or of Division, or of Contradiction, that I

believe and assert it far more excellent and desirable both for Ministers and private Christians to be able from an inward sense of, and acquaintedness with their own case, wants, and necessities, and from the abundance of their Hearts, together with the gracious assistance of the Blessed Spirit of God to pour out their desires into his Bosom, and make their Requests known to him, than to borrow, and make use of, and tie themselves to the best form of another's composing. And I am persuaded our dear Lord Jesus did draw up, and give out to his Disciples that most sweet, full, and comprehensive Prayer as a pattern for them to imitate, not as a form, with which they should sit down contented, without looking after, or making use of those Gifts and Abilities which he either had or should by his Spirit bestow and confer upon them. And as for those who do ridicule and laugh at praying by the Spirit, making it the matter of their scorn and derision, I do not stick to charge them with a Spirit of Profaneness, only I beg that God would show them their sin, and give them Repentance, and a Pardon. These things being thus premised, I do, as before, Counsel you who are my Hearers, not to tie yourselves up to a form of Prayer, and I shall give you three or four Reasons of my advising you so.

First; Because it is my hearty desire that all of you who make Prayer your work and business, should keep yourselves at the greatest distance possible from a lifeless cold formality. Do all that you can to avoid it; not that I think formality is inseparable from form, or that it cannot find room in him who prayeth extemporarily; we all have need to watch both unto Prayer and in it, else we shall have our Hearts to seek while we are seeking of God. But I look upon it as a thing past question among experienced Christians that conceived Prayer, (as it is commonly called) being rightly managed, hath a greater and more direct tendency to the affecting both the Soul of him that utters it, and the Souls of those that join with him, and

towards the raising of them up to a due warmth of Affection, and preserving them in it. I shall recite to you the words of a late Reverend, Holy Divine, of mine intimate Acquaintance, that did Conform to the Church of England, viz. Mr. Gurnal, Famous for that excellent Piece of his, The Christian in Complete Armor, a Book worth Gold. After he had there pleaded for the lawfulness of Forms of Prayer, yea, and that in the Church, he hath these Expressions, The evil is not in a Form, but in Formality, and that is a Disease which may be found in him that prayeth with a conceived Prayer. A Man may pray without a Form, and yet not pray without Formality; and this I grant, but now observe that which follows; I confess, he that binds himself constantly to a set Form, especially in his private addresses, seems to me to be more in danger of the two, of falling under the power of that lazy Distemper.

Secondly; There are some things which may, and often do fall out, which none can so well speak to, as the Master of the Family himself can do, supposing him furnished with such a competent measure of Abilities as doth become one in his place. There are indeed common ordinary cases both of Persons, and Families, and Nations, which some forms may reach, and do very well suit; but there are and may be some particular cases, which the Governor of a Family, who, as he ought, studieth both himself and it, is best able to express and spread before God, Prov. 14.10. The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddles not with his joy. And surely then he is the fittest Person to relate both the one and the other. Supposing a sick Patient have the full use of his Reason, the Physician doth expect from himself the best account of his state.

Thirdly; Conceived Prayer is the most direct way to Spiritual Increases. It is the duty of Christians not to sit down with present attainments, but while they are on this side of Heaven and Glory, to

be continually aspiring and reaching after more; more Grace in order to a greater fitness for the happiness hereafter, and more Gifts in order to a greater serviceableness here. Now what progress is he like to make who continually walketh in a round. If a Child will always walk holding on a Bench, he is not like to be a good Footman. The old saying is, Use Legs, and have Legs; it holds true here, use Parts and have them, yea, and more too. To him that hath, and employeth what he hath, shall be given. I do not doubt but conceived Prayer is better than the constant use of a form for the enriching of a Person with praying-gifts, if I may not say, with Grace too. Let serious and truly honest Christians both of one way and the other speak as they find. I know nothing fitter to determine that than their Experience.

Fourthly; The confining of yourselves to a form of Prayer is a dishonor unto God, whose Glory ye should be dear over, and promote to your utmost. Your Gifts are bestowed upon you in order to his Honor, but what Honor hath he from them when concealed? This is ingratitude to God, where are the returns you make to him for the benefits you have from him. To have the Gift of Prayer, and not to use it, is no other than to bury the Talent in a Napkin; and so to do is not the part of a faithful Servant, nor the way to enter into the Joy of your Lord, when you leave Earth.

Fifthly; It is a dishonor to yourselves; as it would be for a Man to walk with a Crutch when he can go as well, and better without it; it is a making yourselves poor when God hath enriched you, and living upon the Basket, when you have a sufficient Stock of your own.

Sixthly; When you have Gifts for Prayer, and yet confine yourselves to a form, you are injurious to others. Every manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit with all, 1 Cor. 12.7. Every Gift, by which the presence of the Spirit, the in-being and influence of the Spirit doth

appear, is bestowed upon Men not merely for Ornament, but for Use, not for Ostentation, but in order to greater Serviceableness, that they might profit with it, profit others, their Friends, their Families, the Church of God. But now those that have the Gift of Prayer, and use it not, do not profit with it; they do no good to others. It is like Money kept up in a Chest that the Miser is not the better for; or a Candle in a dark Lanthorn that gives no light, and they are not like to profit in it: Not to make any improvement or increase, it is a dead Commodity; thy not using it is losing it; it is the way to have it taken from thee, to have God blow upon it with a withering Breath. And indeed why should a Man have that which he will do nothing with. You know the Parable, the unprofitable Servant buried his Talent, and his Lord commanded he should have it no longer, but be severely punished for his neglect. For all these Reasons, Christians, I do advise you not to tie yourselves up to a form of Prayer; use your own Gifts, but see there be Grace too; content not yourselves with a volubility of Tongue, a freedom and neatness of Expression, but see that the words of your Mouths be the Meditations of your Hearts, and accompanied with the Affections too, that is the way to have them acceptable in the sight of God.

VII. In all your solemn approaches to God, consider with what an infinitely glorious Majesty you have to do, and set yourselves to the work as in his sight. Consider his being of purer Eyes than that he can behold iniquities without loathing and abhorrency; consider that he cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked; and that he is most jealous in those things that appertain to his worship, Lev. 10.3. This is it that the Lord hath spoken, I will be sanctified of all them that come nigh me. Again, consider that God is observant of you at all times, but most curiously so when drawing near him in Duty. He hath said, Where two or three are met together in his name, there he will be in the midst of them, Mat. 18.20. As to hear their suits, so to

observe their behavior. The Judges place is usually in the midst that he may the better see and hear; so God is in the midst of Congregations and Houses to take notice how his work is done, and whether his Servants carry toward him <H&G> as becomes a God. Do you remember therefore the Exhortation given, Heb. 28.29. Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire. Where we may observe,

First; What our God is, viz. A consuming fire. Not a stock or piece of Wood like the Heathen Idols, but a Living, Mighty and Active Being, who can, like Fire, quickly and severely punish those that do provoke him. Nadab and Abihu experienced this upon their Offering with strange Fire. The Apostle saith, Our God is so; the God of the Christians is a consuming Fire, as well as the God of the Jews. He is indeed the Father of Mercies, and God of all Comforts, but with all, Vengeance belongs to him, and he will repay it.

Secondly; What our great interest is, to serve God acceptably. While here we cannot serve God to perfection, but we must serve him to acceptance; what is not done to acceptance is done to no purpose, and will turn to no account; where there is no acceptance of the Duty, there can be no rational expectation of a comfortable Reward.

Thirdly; What is necessary in order thereunto, Grace. Those Duties that come from Grace will meet with Grace; without that the Calves of the Lips will be as odious as Swines-flesh, or the cutting off a Dogs-head. If the Person be bad the work cannot be good; though the Sacrifice of the wicked may be rich and costly, yet because it is his, it proves an abomination to the Lord.

Fourthly; How this Grace must discover and show itself, viz. in reverence and godly fear. See that the awe of God fall upon you, and

fill you, that your fear of him be not slavish but filial, that you fear him and his Goodness, fear to offend as well, and as much as to suffer. Thus David resolved to appear before him, Psal. 5.7. I will come into thine house in the multitude of thy mercies. Encouraged by the many Mercies that have been extended to me, and relying upon that Infinite Mercy that is still in thee; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. And let this inward godly fear manifest itself by the reverence you express while in his presence and service, both at your entrance and all along, from the beginning to the end. Before him Seraphims the glorious Angels cover their Faces with two of their Wings; and if this become those excellent Creatures, Heavens Courtiers, then Dust and Ashes much more. God indeed allows his People a boldness, but it must be a humble one; and herein be you Examples to all in your Families. It indeed is not within the reach of your power to work Grace in the Hearts of your Yoke-fellows, Children or Servants; nor to stir up in them a true filial fear of God, that cannot be effected by any power less than an Omnipotent one, by any Arm shorter than the Divine one; yet see to it that there be a due reverence expressed by them all in their outward Gestures and Deportments; strictly charge and command them to avoid lolling, sleeping, talking, laughing, gazing about, and everything else that speaks a vain light Mind. I add one thing more;

VIII. Be sure to put up all your Prayers to God in the Name of Jesus Christ. He hath left his Spirit, and his Name with us, therefore let us make use of both, seeking for assistance from his gracious Spirit, and for success from his prevailing Name. Unto this we have been directed by our Lord himself, John 16.26. At that day ye shall ask in my name. While he was Corporally present with them, they made their application to him, and asked of him, and he did supply all their needs, and granted to them those things which they desired and were convenient, but after my Resurrection and Ascension, when I am



absent from you, and received up to Glory, Ye shall go to my Father, and that in my Name. I give you free liberty to set my Name to all your holy Petitions, and desire him to fulfil them for my sake.

And to the doing hereof he doth encourage us by a gracious promise of success; both that he himself will fulfil such desires, such Prayers. For this he gives them his word, and we may be sure he will be as good as his word, John 14.13, 14. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son, or by the Son whom he hath raised with his own right Hand, and constituted the sole Mediator; and for our greater assurance and comfort he repeated it in the next Verse, If ye shall ask anything in my Name, I will do it; not only take care that it shall be done, but I myself will do it; which is a strong Argument, and clear Evidence of Christ's being God, since he doth the work of God in hearing and answering of Prayer. And he likewise tells us in John 16.23. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you; only you must necessarily suppose that what you so ask must be according to his Will, and for our Good, 1 John 5.14. This is the confidence which we have of him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; we shall be sure to obtain it, to have the Petitions we desire of him. There is a certainty of speeding when we pray aright in the Name of Christ, and with Faith in that Name; that which so goeth up in a Cloud of Prayer, shall descend in a Shower of Mercy; there is nothing shall hinder it, none on Earth, none in Hell can, and none in Heaven will, for the Father and Christ are one, one in Nature, and one in Will; both are perfectly agreed as in other things, so in this of fulfilling such Prayers; you shall have your desire, Christ will do it, and so will the Father, both will consent, both concur and co-operate. This is, as a late worthy Divine hath observed, part of that Glory which God hath put upon Christ, all must be done in his Name. Prayer, ask in my Name. Church-

meetings, when two or three are met together in my Name; Church-censures, 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan. Ministers are to Preach in his Name, and to Baptize in his Name; therefore whensoever you pray to the Father, be sure that you do it believingly in the Name of Christ, both in public and in private, both when you are by yourselves alone, and when with your Families; and that,

First; For your own sakes; that when you knock, it may be opened to you, and you may have what you ask, and find what you seek; that instead of being with anger rejected, your Prayers may be graciously received, and be sanctified by the Golden Altar, and being accompanied with the Incense of our Blessed Advocate, may come up as so many Odors, and find the desired acceptance, and do it.

Secondly; For your Families sake; that by this means they may be put upon Enquiries after this precious Lord Jesus, for this will be to them an occasion of asking you and others concerning him, who, and what he is? And so they may come to some knowledge of him, whom to know is Life Eternal, as the way to it, and the beginning of it; they may know him as the one and only Mediator between God and Man, as the great Master of Requests that is at the Fathers Right Hand ready to receive all the Petitions of his poor but dear People, and as ready to expunge the faults and supply the defects of them, and so to present them to the Father, and to back them with his own Intercession which is powerful and prevailing, the Father heareth him always; and this being accompanied with the Spirit and Blessing of God may prosper to the working in them some love and good liking of him, and by consequence kindle in them some desires after an Interest in him, as in one that is great and good, as in one that they stand in absolute need of, without whom they cannot be saved,

nor find favor with God, but must everlastingly perish and be undone; since there is nothing that can commend them to God but Jesus Christ; no Wings that can secure them but those of this Sun of Righteousness; nothing that can wash out their stains and filth but his Blood, nothing that can cover their nakedness and shame but his Robe; nothing that can make their Beauty perfect but his Comeliness put upon them. In short, in this way, and with your help they may come to understand, that it is not their good meanings, nor their good doings, not their civility and honest dealings with Men, not their keeping clear of bad actions, the gross pollutions that are in the World through Lust, no, nor their running in a round of duty that will justify them; but only the complete, perfect Obedience of Christ, and his precious Blood, as of a Lamb without spot; and that it is not their Prayers, though long and fervent, that will prevail with God, but only the Mediation and Intercession of Christ. And to this end I would give you this advice further, content not yourselves with a bare naming Christ in your Prayers, but make an honorable mention of him, after such a manner as this; Our dear Lord Jesus, Jesus who is the Lord our Righteousness, who loved us, and washed us in his own Blood, and made us Kings and Priests unto God; Jesus who died for our Offences, and rose again for our Justification. By frequent repetitions of such things in your Prayers, and suitable Discourses at other times, the Lord Jesus may become acceptable and precious to them, through whom, and for whose sake both you and they must become acceptable to God, if ever ye be so. Having spoken so largely to this Subject, my earnest Request is, that you all would set up, and keep up this necessary and excellent duty of Morning and Evening-prayer every day in your respective Families, carefully observing and putting in practice those Rules which have been laid down for the better performance of it; and my hearty Prayer for you who do so is, that you may have help from Heaven in the work, and afterward receive such gracious answers, and plentiful returns, as may raise

and fix in you a resolution of calling upon God as long as you live. There is but one Objection against this holy practice, which I judge worthy to be taken notice of, and I will do what I can to silence the Objection, and to do him good that humbly makes it.

Object. Some poor Creature may put in and say, Sir, you have with much Importunity and Zeal stirred us up to the performance of Family-duties, and in particular that of Prayer, and I have with diligence attended to what hath been spoken, and cannot but acknowledge there is much strength in those Arguments which have been used and urged for the pressing it upon us; so that I am convinced of the goodness of the thing, and own it to be my Duty, and would be glad to do it if I could, but I am not in a capacity, my ignorance is exceeding great, and my parts full out as little; I have no such Gifts as other Men have, and so tremble to think of undertaking so great and weighty a thing as this; should I make an attempt, for certain I should most shamefully miscarry, and render myself ridiculous; it is to be feared, that this is really the case of too too many in this City, yea, and possibly of some in this Congregation.

Answ. To such a one I will answer in these following Particulars.

I. Thou who makest this Objection art a very great Object of Pity, and I do heartily pity thee. What! O Man, canst thou converse in the World, and discourse with thine Acquaintance, manage thine Affairs, and carry on thy Trade, and yet not Pray? Canst thou deal with thy Customers, and not with thy God? Thou hast scarce thy Fellow in any sort of Wretches; there is not a poor Creature in Town or Country that wanteth Bread, and hath a craving Stomach, but he can beg, though he doth not know one Letter in the Book, yet he can ask for an Alms; nor is there a Malefactor in danger of his Life, but will find something to say for himself; though he cannot make out his

Innocency, nor clear himself of the Crime laid to his Charge, though he hath nothing to say why the Sentence of Death should not be past upon him, yet he can fall down upon his Knees and say, Mercy, my Lord, Mercy; and canst thou not do as much when thy Case is as bad, and worse? Thy Soul, Man, is ready to starve, and so are the Souls of thy Family, all in extreme necessity, and canst thou not beg? Thou art worthy of death, and so are they, Sentence hath been already past, and hast thou not anything to say for the staying of the Execution? Thou and thy Family have a great number of great wants, and canst thou not ask a supply when it may be had for asking? Thou art a poor, sorry, pitiful Creature indeed, if there be one in the World. It is a thousand pities thou shouldest have a Family, a Wife and Children, who canst neither provide necessaries for their Souls, nor beg for them. Thou hast indeed but little, very little love and kindness for thyself, and Family, in thy heart, and as little brains in thy head, who canst not go to God, and speak a few good words for them.

II. Since thou dost not to this day know how to Pray, I advise thee to learn to do it, and that speedily, for it is high time; when thou wast young and little thou didst not know great A. but now thou canst read distinctly, roundly, yea, and write a legible hand, how came that about? Thou didst learn it. So when thou wast first bound an Apprentice to thy Master, thou couldest do nothing at thy Trade, no, not a stroke, thou wast a very Ignoramus, thou couldest not tell the Price of those Commodities which thou wast to deal in, much less judge of their goodness; nay, thou couldest not so much as tell their Names, but now thou art expert and skillful, and there are very few Persons that can out do thee in thy business, and how came this about? Thou didst learn it. In the present Case, go thou and do the like: thou sayst thou canst not Pray, I say, go thou and learn to Pray; be thou who thou wilt, for thy Worldly Quality I am sure thou art not

too good for it, and I hope thou art not too old; beg therefore of God, that he would teach thee; the Disciples desired this very thing of Christ, Luke 11.1. Lord, teach us to Pray, as John also taught his Disciples, and without more ado he did it, go you and do likewise; fall upon your knees, and say, Lord, I am a poor ignorant Creature, I do not know how to Pray, O! Do thou teach me. And for your comfort and encouragement know,

First, It is the work of the Spirit to assist poor Souls in Prayer, it is one of the works of his Office, Rom. 8.26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our Infirmities, for we know not what to Pray for as we ought; that is as much as thou canst say of thyself; neither know how to Pray, to Pray as we should, nor what to Pray for, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Secondly, God hath graciously promised this Spirit to his Church, and Children, and that under the very notion of a Spirit of Prayer, Zech. 12.10. I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem a Spirit of Grace and Supplication. He will give much of it, he will pour it out.

Thirdly, God is most ready to make good his Promises, this in particular. He is both faithful, and free, Luke 11.13. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Go therefore, and beg of God, that he would give this Spirit to thee.

III. Do thy endeavor, making use of those means by which an ability to Pray, I mean the gift of Prayer may be in some measure attained, for we are not to please ourselves with expecting much, and doing nothing, idle hopes are vain; if you ask me what means you should make use of, I briefly answer.

First, Carefully observe others, Godly Ministers, and Christians, when thou hearest them Pray, mind how they pour out their requests unto God, and get something out of their Prayers which is proper for thee; as when Persons are in a Garden where they see variety of curious and pleasant Flowers, they will pick one here, and another there, for themselves; do the like with those apt and pertinent expressions which thou hearest from others, make them thine own, only in using them, let tongue and heart go together.

Secondly, Be very conversant in the holy Scriptures, and there take notice of precepts and promises, and turn them into Prayer, begging that God would give what he commands, and perform what he promiseth; in particular acquaint thyself well with David's Psalms, in which you will find abundance of excellent matter both for confession and petition, for prayer, and praise.

Thirdly, Be much in studying your own and your Families State, and consider how matters stand with you, seriously think what sins there are, and what afflictions, what wants, and what dangers, and thereupon go to God, and beg of him the pardon of those sins, and power against them, beg the sanctifying of those afflictions, that they may be wholesome, though bitter, and out of the eater there may come Meat; make a thankful acknowledgment of the Mercies you receive, and give unto God the glory of them; Petition for the gracious supply of those wants, and prevention of those dangers, from all these things you may gather together a great deal of fit matter for Prayer, only still beg of God that he would by his Spirit assist, influence and enable you to make a right use of it.

IV. I dare assure thee, that if thou wilt sincerely and in good earnest set thyself about the work, God will not be wanting to thee; do thou in obedience go out to thy duty, and he will graciously come in to thy

assistance; our endeavors indeed and utmost activity lay no obligation upon him, but his own grace and goodness do induce and move him. David said, Psalm 138.3. In the day when I cried thou answer'dst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my Soul. Do thou, O poor Soul, take encouragement from thence, direct thy Prayer to God, and look up in the day that thou criest unto God, he may answer thee too, and afford thee that which at present thou laborest and groanest under the want of, and as he strengthened David with strength in his Soul, so he may bestow upon thee a competency of gifts, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit.

God doth now by me call you out to the performance of this Duty, Family Prayer, but you complain of an unfitness for it, and not without cause; well, remember God did once immediately call Moses out to a great work, public work, to go and speak to Pharaoh, and in the name of God to command him to let Israel go; he was very unwilling to comply, but as thou complainest of inability, so did he, thou thinkest thyself unfit to be the Families mouth to God, Moses thought himself unfit to be God's mouth to Pharaoh, Exod. 4.10. O my Lord, I am not Eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy Servant, but I am slow of Speech, and of a slow Tongue, far from being fit to be sent upon God's Errand to so Great and Proud a Prince; but mark what God answered him, ver. 11. Who hath made Mans mouth? Or who hath made the dumb or deaf, or seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. I that made the mouth can mend it, I made the Instrument, and can tune it, I can supply the defects, and cure the infirmities of it; if it be a flow tongue I can quicken it, I can put to it eloquence, and nimbleness.

Bring this now to the case in hand, it is thy duty to pray in and with thy Family, thou art now loudly called to it, the great God calls thee



to it by me, and I do not in the least question, but if thou hast any sense of a Deity, thine own Conscience hath called thee to it many and many a time before now, and I pray thee to bethink thyself, did nobody else, did thy Wife never desire it of thee? Did thy Child never beg it of thee? Did none of thy Friends who loved thee, put thee upon it? And hast thou not done it yet? How inexorable art thou, how hard thy heart? What! So loath to come to thy duty? Yea, to that which is thy privilege as well as thy duty, this is quite contrary to the Wisdom which is from above, which is easy to be entreated; take shame to thyself, and mend now, go home, and in good earnest fall to the work, and I dare say God will be with thy heart, yea and with thy mouth too.

V. Practice will be accompanied with improvement, use doth greatly facilitate things. How awkwardly doth a Child move the feet when it first begins to go? Who can observe it without a smile, but yet in a little time it hath got the knack of it, and can move them regularly, nimbly, and with strength, and knows how to walk and run as well as others. There are indeed difficulties in Duty, but to the sincere Soul the difficulties wear off, and the duty will grow easier and easier, the way of the Lord being strength to the upright, so that therein they go from strength, to strength. After that upon the Commandment of God, Moses had once gone in to Pharaoh, and spoken, we do not read of his complaining anymore, no, not though God told him that he would harden Pharaoh 's heart, yet as often as God ordered him, he went, not desisting, till Pharaoh commanded him to see his face no more.

Therefore begin, Man begin, and see what will come of it; fall to work, you will find that your labor is not in vain. The Scripture saith, ye shall know, if ye follow on to know the Lord; and I may say, ye shall pray better and better, if ye will but follow on to pray, by means

hereof you will attain to a greater knowledge of God, and more intimate acquaintance with him, and your own hearts, and you will find inward increases and growth in grace, and a changing of you into his Image, from glory, to glory, and that will help toward the production of a more holy boldness toward God, and a greater Parrhesia, liberty or freedom of Speech, and your hearts will be more enlarged; as Sin grows by acting it, so doth grace, yea, and gifts too. Trading tends to thriving, to him that hath, shall be given, i.e., to him that useth what he hath as he should; the conscientious performance of duty is the way to bring down from God a blessing upon your parts. I will add but one thing more.

VI. Supposing thou shouldest never be able to do thy work so well as many of thy fellow Servants can, yet do not lay it aside, but do it as well as thou canst. The Apostle Paul speaks of diversities of gifts, and diversities of administrations, and diversities of operations, 1 Cor. 12. So there is a diversity of degrees, in God's conferring those gifts upon Men; good and faithful Servants are not made equal, as we read in the Lord's entrusting them with Talents: one had five, another had but two, yet both faithful and industrious; the wicked and slothful Servant had only one, yet he should have traded with it, though he had but little to do, he ought to have been doing. So it is here, God is pleased to give large parts to some, so that they have a quick and fertile invention, and an answerable elocution, they can speak their minds freely, and clothe their conceptions with apt, yea, curious expressions, so as to charm the ears, and delight the hearts of those that join with them; but thou art poor, and barren, at a great loss both for matter and words; be humble upon this account, and little in thine own eyes, but not altogether discouraged, but fall to thy work, Man, Trade with thine one Talent.

What though thou dost not Pray so as to raise the admiration, and gain the applause of them that hear thee? Is it not very well if thou canst so pray as to find acceptance with God? What though it be jarring in their ears, so long as it is music in his? Know thou hast to deal with a good Master, the God of all grace, who, if there be a willing Mind, doth accept according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not. The poor Publican was very short, he had much to desire, yet little to say, his dejected looks and sorrowful gesture spake more than his Tongue did; but though he was short, yet he was sweet, we read but of one Petition that he put up to God, God be merciful to me a Sinner, but he accompanied it with his heart, and it came before God as incense, who sent him home to his house justified, Luke 18.13.14. God took away the filthy garments, he came in, and put on him a Robe of Righteousness. The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit, a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Psalm 51.17, despise it! No, no, he is so far from that, that he requires it, and approves it, and will bind it up. A broken Prayer from and with a broken Heart, makes Melody in Heaven. God will count it his delight. Alas! He seeth not as Man sees, looks not at the flourishes of words, but at the life, fervency and Zeal of the Soul, for those flowers may be strewed upon a dead and rotten carcass. Indeed, if a Man bring the Torn, and the Sick, and the Lame for an Offering to the Lord, when he hath better, it shall not be accepted, Malachi. 1.13, but if that Torn, and Lame, and Sick, be the Male of the Flock, if it be the best he hath, God will receive it graciously, and have respect to the Person, and to his Offering, and Grace will say he hath done what he could, as our Lord pleaded for the Woman, when his Disciples did absurdly trouble her, Mark 14.8. Not only those Richer Persons, who brought Gold, and Silver, and Silk, and Precious Stones to the service of the Tabernacle were welcome, but those also who came with their Goats-Hair, and Badgers-Skins, if they had no better. I am willing to hope, that by what hath been said, the mouth

of this Objection is stopped, the edge of this Argument blunted, and so this untoward rub removed which lay in the way of thy Duty; therefore I beg earnestly of thee that thou wouldest defer no longer, but get up, break thro' all opposition, and since God hath said, seek ye my face; let thine heart answer, thy face, Lord, will I seek. Before I go off from this Subject, I shall direct my Discourse to two sorts of Persons.

First, I would speak something to you whose hearts God hath touched, so that you love your work, and do it, making Family-Prayer your every day business. I bless you in the name of the Lord, and the God of Heaven bless you; while I beg it for you, may he bestow it abundantly upon you, and pour it out till you be rich in blessings; the good Lord strengthen your hands and hearts more and more in this work, and encourage you by his gracious answers; may you find by frequent and large experience, that he hath not said to you, seek ye my face in vain. The Lord teach you to pray, and assist you by his Holy Spirit? The Lord send you help from the Sanctuary, and strengthen you out of Zion; remember all your Offerings, grant you according to your own hearts, and fulfill all your Petitions, which are according to his Mind, and Will; may you by the Bucket of Prayer draw Water with joy out of the Well of Salvation; let him never turn away your Prayer, nor his Mercy from you.

Secondly, Do you also suffer the word of exhortation, who have your lines cast in those Families in which there is Prayer, and the Worship of God; do you take special notice of it, as a choice mercy, and accordingly value it, and bless the Lord for disposing you so graciously, planting you not in a dry and barren Wilderness where there is no Water, but in a Paradise, an Eden that is so well watered. You that are Wives, and Married to Praying Husbands, do you bless God, and you Children who have been begotten by Praying Fathers,

and you Servants who work for, and wait upon Praying Masters, let all that is within you bless his Holy Name, and see to it that you improve the Mercy, lose not such a Season, such an Opportunity. Oh! How much good may you get, how much the better may you be, in case you be not wanting to yourselves? And who can tell how much Mercy such a Husband, such a Father, such a Master, may obtain, how many Blessings he may procure at the hand of God for you? Read what the Queen of Sheba said to King Solomon, in the 1 of Kings, 10.8. Happy are these thy Men, and happy are these thy Servants, which stand continually before thee, and that bear thy Wisdom. She had seen the House he had built, and the ascent by which he went up to the House of the Lord, and the Meat at his Table, and the sitting of his Servants, and the attendance of his Ministers, and their Apparel, but there was something above all this that she admired. She did not look upon the happiness of his Servants, as consisting in beholding the greatness of his State and Honor, and the Splendor and Glory of his Court, or in feeding every day upon his Royal Dainties, and Drinking his Generous Wines, but in hearing of his Wisdom. I may as well, yea, and much more say of you, in case you are your own Friends, happy, thrice happy are you, who live in such a Family (though as the lowest and meanest Members of it) in which you may every day hear the Master of it speaking to God, and conversing with Heaven, and every day perfuming the House with the precious Odors of his gracious and holy Prayers. So much may suffice to be spoken concerning that great and excellent Work of Family prayer, and Oh! That it may not be in vain as to any of you, if it be, you must answer for it another day.

But that is not all, Christians, the whole of your work doth not lie in Prayer, this you must do, and not leave the rest undone, no, none of it undone! I remember the holy Apostle Paul speaking of Epaephras,

whom he calls a Servant of Christ, and of them, a Citizen of Colos, a Member of their Church, and Teacher, much set for their good, saith, Col. 4.12. He always labored fervently for them in Prayer, that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God; which is a great thing, and deserves our utmost endeavors, and his so laboring in Prayer for them to this end, spake him a good Man, and a singular Friend of theirs; and it is my Hearts desire, and my frequent Prayer that it may be so with you. And this should be the Desire and Prayer, the Care and Endeavor of every one of you who are Godly Parents, and Religious Governors of Families, that both you yourselves, and all those that are yours, may be perfect and complete in all the Will of God; that the Divine Will may be known by you, and likewise conformed and lived up to, for, He that knoweth his Masters will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; when God takes his Rod in Hand, Luke 12.47. Now, Family-instruction is one part of the Will of God concerning you who are Parents and Masters, yea, and Mistresses too.

You are Priests in your own Houses, and as such ought not to be without your Sacrifices; Prayer is your Duty.

You are Prophets also there, and though it would be folly in you to turn Enthusiasts, and Predict Things to come, yet you ought not to be without your Teachings, and wholesome Counsels; and in one respect you will not. You that are Parents will, as soon as may be, teach your Children to speak and go, and when through Age and Discretion they are capable, you will bring them up to some Employment and Trade or other, that they may afterwards arrive at some considerable Quality and Estate in the World, at least, that they may be able to earn their Bread, and get their Living without being chargeable to yourselves or others; and shall this be the utmost Extent of your Care? Will you not teach them the fear of God, and

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? Will you not labor to bring them to a good understanding in the matters of Religion which are of highest importance, and show them the way they should take in order to their coming unto Glory at the last? If you are guilty of neglect herein what satisfactory Reason can you give of being so? Here I cannot forbear telling you, that it hath often, and often been to me great matter of grief to see Persons grown up to Man's and Woman's Estate, yea, to grey Hairs, that could not read a Word, nor tell a Letter, whereupon I could not without just indignation reflect upon their unnatural Parents, who were so brutishly wanting to that love, kindness and pity which they ought to have had for them; and now I make it my Request to you, yea, the poorest among you, that you would take greater and better care of your Children, see that they be taught to Read, and then that they Read the Bible; do this though you pinch for it in other things, yea, though you spare it out of your own and their Bellies; and if you cannot possibly do it out of your sorry pittance, beg the Charity of those you know, who may help in that without prejudice to themselves, a little matter will do, and this will turn to a greater account than relieving common Vagrants. And so for you that are Masters and Mistresses, and have Apprentices bound to you, I own it that they are bound to give you reverence, and to serve you with all diligence and faithfulness, and so let them in the fear of the Lord, but withal do you know and consider that you are obliged to take care of them, and teach them, what? Your Trades? And the Mysteries of them? Yes without peradventure, your Indentures tell you so; and if you do it not you deal falsely, but you are also to instruct them in the greatest and best Trade, that of Godliness, that with Heaven, in order to their being wise Merchants, and getting the Pearl of Price. That Family-instruction ought to be carefully attended to, I shall briefly prove.

1. By Scripture Precedents.

## 2. By Scripture Precept.

First; By Scripture Precedent, or Example. This hath been the practice of good Men recorded there, of a great Character, Eminent for their Faith and Holiness. You have in these Discourses already heard of that great confidence which God had in Abraham, who was called the Friend of God, and Father of the Faithful. God said, He knew him that he would command or order his Children, and his Household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord. And we must conclude, Divine Wisdom, which is Infinite, is not, cannot be liable to a mistake, neither as to things nor Persons. Now we read in Gen. 14, that when his Kinsman or Nephew Lot was taken Captive and carried away. Abraham armed his trained Servants, and pursued them unto Dan; your Bibles in the Margin have it, his instructed Servants, some render it his Catechized Servants, those, say some Learned Expositors, whom he had well taught and instructed not only in Domestic Business which concerned the House, nor only in Military Affairs which related to War, but likewise and principally in Religion, and the Law of God.

So again, Solomon the wisest of mere Men, at least in his time, was called Jedediah, the Beloved of the Lord, and that he was so appeared by God's appointing him to succeed in the Throne as King of Israel, and choosing him to Build the Temple, both which were demonstrations of that particular kindness God had for him. And he was dearly beloved of his Father and Mother; now the Love which they did bear him was evidenced by his gracious Education, and in their Parental Care for the right bringing of him up, Prov. 4.3, 4. I was my Fathers Son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my Mother, he taught me also, and said unto me, let thy heart retain my Words, keep my Commandments, and live; get wisdom, get understanding, &c. One saith, Doubtless his Father David being a



King had Nathan the Prophet, and the best and most accomplished Persons the Kingdom could afford for the bringing up of his Son for whom he designed the Crown, yet he did not leave it wholly to them, but would himself have an hand in the work, yea, a main one. Neither did his Mother think herself excused, but as she had brought him forth, so she would bring him up, as you may see in Prov. 31.1. The words of King Lemuel the Prophecy which his Mother taught him. But passing from that, we will consider,

Secondly; Scripture Precept. And as I desire you to imitate and follow those good Examples, so to remember and conform to holy commands given out from God by his Servants, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. I shall only mention that one which we have, Eph. 6.4. Parents provoke not your Children unto wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is a Scripture that deserves to be written in Letters of Gold, and to be deeply impressed upon the Minds and Hearts of Parents. I cannot lightly pass over it; two things are remarkable in it.

First; A Prohibition.

Secondly; An Injunction.

First, Here is a Prohibition; something forbidden, and carefully to be avoided; Parents provoke not your Children unto wrath. It may be, this will sound harsh in the Ears of some, who have better thoughts of themselves than they do deserve, or anybody else have; they may be apt to conclude that Paul did forget himself here, and should rather have said, Children provoke not your Parents unto wrath To avoid that is their Duty and Interest; but the Apostle knew what he did, when he said, Parents provoke not your Children unto wrath; though you are above them, older and stronger than they, though they have their dependence upon you, though you at present give

them their Maintenance, and must hereafter their Portion, yet provoke them not, do nothing to incense and enrage them. A Wasp is a very little feeble Creature, yet do not anger it, for it hath a Sting. Do not irritate your Children by too much severity; remember the Authority you have over them is Parental, therefore your Government should be sweet and easy; you should so carry as to be both feared and loved at the same time; and in order to that not rule with a Rod of Iron, but draw and bind them to you with the Cords of a Man, those of Reason and Kindness; more particularly, do not provoke your Children.

First; Not by unreasonable requiries, and hard commands; lay not a Man's burden upon a Child's Shoulders; exact not that which is above their ability to do.

Secondly; Do not make unequal distributions of your kindnesses among them, being all Honey to one, and all Gall to another; remember they are equally yours; though your Affections may incline more to one than another, yet conceal it as much as you can, unless their goodness and obedience make an apparent difference.

Thirdly; Provoke them not by giving them undue, unreasonable Correction; the Rod is sometimes as necessary as Bread, but it must always be used with a prudent love; let not your Rod be too smart, nor your Hand too heavy; convince them that your chastening of them is not for your pleasure, but for their profit.

Fourthly; Provoke them not by calling them reproachful Names, as Fool, Blockhead, Rascal, or the like, which may expose them to the slight of others, to the contempt of your very Servants; while you hate their offenses be tender of their Reputation.

Lastly; Provoke them not by continual chiding, and threatening, finding fault with everything they do; overlook some smaller faults, and wink at others, knowing yourselves are not blameless; let not the Poison of Asps dwell under your Tongues, nor all your words be as sharp Swords, but draw them to their duty, keep them at it, and encourage them in it, rather by love than fear. By provoking your Children unto wrath by all or any of these ways, you create to yourselves more grief and sorrow than you at present are aware of, for by rigor and severity the minds of your Children may be alienated and estranged from you: through your imprudent and unnatural Carriage, it may come to pass that instead of loving, reverencing and honoring you as Parents, they will only fear and dread you as Tyrants; so that in after-times when you shall need them as Staffs in your Hands for support, they may prove Thorns in your sides piercing you thorough with many sorrows. Well, remember provoking your Children to wrath is forbidden, therefore carefully avoid it.

Secondly; In that Scripture there is an Injunction, or something commanded; that is, the bringing of your Children up in the fear and nurture of the Lord. The Greek hath it, <H&G>. The nurture and admonition of the Lord. The former word Translated Nurture doth signify such Education or Discipline as is convenient or fit for young ones, made up of wise Instructions and needful Correction. The latter word by our Translators, rendered admonition, may be looked on as being of a double import, and signifying,

1. A putting something into the Mind.
2. A putting of the Mind into a right frame.

First then; It is the Duty, and should be the Endeavor of Parents to put something into the Minds of their Children, to stock them well,

to instill and drop into them something that should be there, something that will be proper for them, and do them good; that those choice and excellent Cabinets may be filled with Spiritual Riches, with goodly Pearls, yea, the Pearl of Price, in which by Nature (as it is now corrupted) there is nothing but filthy dross and dung. Now there is in them nothing but Vanity and Folly, false Notions, wrong Conceptions of things; and it is pity such vain Thoughts should lodge there, a thousand pities they should continue and abide there; labor to get them out by degrees, as soon and as fast as you can, that so instead of them, and in their room, you may happily introduce those things which are precious, and of value, viz. the Truths of God, Right, Orthodox and Saving Principles: get into these narrow-mouthed Bottles drop by drop, as they are capable of receiving them, the true Notion of things; for good Principles do directly tend to the producing of good Practices; and a Divine Light set up in their Understandings may keep them in the way of Peace, and out of the path of the Destroyer, for by means thereof they will be put into a capacity of discerning the way in which they ought to go. Ignorance may be the Mother of a silly Devotion, that O Papists we will grant you, but, God having told us, His people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, we cannot but look upon it as the Highway to Perdition. Since without knowledge the Heart cannot be good, we will not stick at concluding, that without it the end cannot be peace.

Secondly; It is the duty, and should be the endeavor of Parents to put the Minds of their Children into a right frame, to cast them into a due Mold, and set them in a proper posture. It is now a dark Mind, there is blackness of darkness in it, your work is to illuminate it, and to set up there the Candle of the Lord. It is a corrupt Mind, the Scripture tells us, The Mind and Conscience is defiled, your work and duty is to cleanse it, and rid out all the filth that is there. Now that I may afford you all the help that I can in order thereto, I shall

propound and offer some things to your Consideration and Practice, speaking first more generally, then more particularly; in general, I advise these four things.

First; See carefully to it, that the Holy Scripture be read in your Families. The Bible is the Book of Books, may as well be so called as the Canticles is the Song of Songs. There is an inexhaustible Treasure for the enriching of the Mind, and a Golden exact Rule for the ordering of the Life. That is the most blessed and full Revelation of the Mind and Will of God concerning us, whereby we may by Prayer and Study come to know what things we are to believe as God's Truths, and what to practice as our own Duties, what to reject as Errors, and what to avoid as Sins. There we have the great things of the Law for our Direction, and the precious things of the Gospel for our Consolation; these are able to make us wise for Salvation, and thoroughly to furnish us for every good work which our heavenly Lord and Master hath cut out for us.

This is part of the description of a blessed Man, that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in that law he doth meditate day and night, Psal. 1.2. And it is the Will of God not only that you yourselves should know them, such Monopolizing is not grateful to the King of Glory, but also teach them your Children, Deut. 6.6, 7. These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart to know them, and to love them; but to have them in their own Hearts was not all, it was not enough, no, no, read on, thou shalt teach them diligently to thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest in the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. The Word of God is to be the matter of our Meditation, and of our Discourses at all times, and in all places, I mean, in the Morning, and in the Evening, at home, and abroad. This alone is excellent Food, and to other discourse it is an excellent

seasoning. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy speaks of his having known the Scriptures of a Child, ab incunabulis, almost from his Cradle; he did, as it were, suck them in with his Mothers Milk, but how came that to pass? By means of Parental Care, the Teachings and Instructing's of his Parents, for certain, of his Mother in that young and tender Age.

Secondly; Look diligently to the Catechizing of them. Blessed be God that Exercise hath been for some Years kept up in our Congregation, and is now singularly well performed by my worthy Brother, Mr. Alexander, whom you have chosen and called to that and other Ministerial Work among you; the Lord grant his Blessing both to him and to it, that there may be much good fruit thereof seen and felt both in young and old; and by the way I cannot pass it by in silence, that it is some trouble to me there are no more of your Children and Servants brought into it; and I cannot but reckon it a bad sign of proud or slothful unwillingness in them, or else of a wretched neglect or carelessness in some of you. But I advise and earnestly desire you as to be thankful for, so not to rest in what is done here, but come out to our help, and do your duty at home, teach you your Children and Servants their Catechism, and examine them in it yourselves. In the Assembly's Catechism (which is used in our Congregation, and which I commend to your Family use) you have a Body of Divinity summarily contained, the main Fundamental Principles of Religion, necessary to be known in order to Salvation, methodically propounded, and also brought into so narrow a compass, that they will not oppress and burden the memory, but if blessed of God, mend both head and heart. To the want of this we may, I doubt not, in part impute it, that there among us so many wicked and profane persons, so many Sons and Daughters of Belial, so many ungodly, impudent and debauched Young ones; Hos. 4.1. There is no knowledge of God in the Land; to be sure then there is a great deal of villainy; yes; verse

2. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing Adultery they break out, and Blood toucheth Blood. Darkness being in the Mind, the Works of Darkness will be in the Life: an uninstructed Head, an unsanctified Heart, and a wicked Life go together; through this means so many precious Souls go down to Hell, and are forever lost, they perish for lack of knowledge; for lack of this the Labors of Ministers are no more successful. Want of Family-Instruction is one great reason of so much unprofitable Hearing.

3dly. Take all possible care, that none under your Charge profane the Lord's-Day: That is a day which God hath sanctified, by choosing it out of the rest of the days, and setting it apart for holy use; and it is his will that all his People should sanctify it too; as he hath made it holy, they must keep it so: We are to call it a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and honor it, or, him; i.e. Honor God by honoring the Sabbath, not doing our own ways upon it, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words. There are ways, and pleasures, and words proper for that day, but they must not be our own, no, nothing of our own, it must be the way of God, and the pleasure of God, and the word of God that we are for upon that day, and not our own; Isa, 58.13. Neither our corrupt sinful thoughts, the froth or scum of our depraved Nature, nor our worldly profits, nor our sensual pleasures; we must bring our thoughts, our minds and hearts, and strength with us, but lay them at the foot of God, devote them to his service, and engage them entirely about his work. Upon that day we are not of a due elevation till above ourselves, and above the World; nothing of our own is to be minded or done by us save works of Necessity and Mercy: It is God's day, and therefore to be employed about the things of God, thoughts of God, discourses of God, the Service and Worship of God should take up the whole of that holy day: To do worldly business, to follow bodily recreations

upon that day, is no less than Sacrilege, a robbing of God. Therefore take care of your Families as to this; do not you set your Children or Servants about the affairs of your Callings on that day; see also that they mis-spend it not themselves, but in the performing acts of duty, preparing to wait upon God in the way of his Public Ordinances, and thither do you carry them with you, not suffering them to stay lazying, sleeping, or playing at home, or to go rambling abroad whither they themselves please; no, no, in this case put on the Spirit of Elijah, and be very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts; see that That day be kept for God, and when you and your Families are at home, exercise yourselves and them unto Godliness. The continuance of Religion in England doth under God very much depend upon a care of keeping the Sabbath. Many years ago when I was a young Man, Famous Mr. Newcomen of Dedham told me this passage: This Question was put in the Conclave, What is the best way to reduce England to the see of Rome? To this every Cardinal was to give his Answer, beginning at the youngest. Many Expedients were propounded, at length an old Fox stood up, and said, Take away their Sabbaths, and that will effectually do it: This Invention was hugged, this Medium resolved upon, and not long after came out the Book of Sports. O holy Mother Church! Whose Interest is promoted by such unholy means. And let me tell you, I do never expect to see Religion flourishing, nay not living long in that Family, in which there is not due regard had to the Lord's-day. Therefore as in all other things, so particularly in this, I do advise and earnestly beseech you to be as tender and careful of the Interest of the great God as you are of your own, and more too.

Fourthly; When you have been waiting upon God in the ways of his Public Worship, and have had the Counsels of his holy Will made known to you, and the great Mysteries of Religion opened, at your return to your own houses, do you retire yourselves and be alone



with God, lest by being in company with others, and falling into discourses of another nature, you lose the things you had heard, and those impressions wear out that were made upon you; and also allow convenient time to all in your Families for their Private Devotions, remembering they have precious immortal Souls, the Salvation of which they are as much concerned to work out as yourselves are of your own. I have somewhere read of a King (I wish there were more like him) who, while he was teaching a poor Boy that belonged to his Kitchen, being asked the reason why he did so, answered, The poorest hath a Soul as precious as mine, and cost the same price, no less than the Blood of Christ. And when you see a fit season, call them all together, and bless God for the Truths you have heard, and pray that he would bless them to you, and bring them back to your own and their minds by the repetition of them; and demand of them an account, which to do is a very probable way to keep them from sleeping in the Congregation, and from a supine carelessness, and vain foolish absurd gazing about, and also of imprinting something upon their minds and thoughts, which may have a powerful influence upon their hearts and lives, and do them good afterward, yea as long as they live; and when this is done, praise the Name of the Lord by singing of a Psalm, and pray to him for acceptance of, and a blessing upon what you have done, and so commit yourselves and yours to his Fatherly Protection in the Night, and his gracious Conduct the following Week; in the course whereof let there be nothing contradictory to your Lord's-days profession, or inconsistent with it. I beseech you draw an even Thread in Religion. These four things which I have spoken to you, are good for you, and necessary to be done, but they are generals: Therefore now I shall proceed to some more particular Directions, for the Instructing of your Families, which I would have you carefully to observe, and the great God shine upon your endeavors, that so they may prove very successful to your comfort and joy.

## IV.

### Particular Directions for the Instructing of your Families

First; Begin with instructing them about the Being of a God. Though this Truth be engraven in their hearts; though the things that are made do plainly Preach to them his Eternal Power and Godhead, yet be not you silent, but speak the same thing to them over again and again, and so betimes, even as soon as ever you can; principle them against that brutish, yet growing Atheism; which is an Enemy to all Religion, and opens a wide and effectual Door unto all Villainy and Profaneness. That Person who denies the Being of a God, is a sit Tool for the Devil to make use of, yea to employ about his worst Services, and basest Drudgery.

And thou Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Fathers, said good David; 1 Chron. 28.9. Know there is a God, and in particular know him that hath been, and is thy Fathers God, and let him be thy God too. Love him, choose him, cleave to him.

Show them the Heaven and the Earth, and the things that are in them, and that these could not make themselves, but must of necessity be made by another; how many second Causes soever may be enumerated, we cannot take up our rest in any of them, but must pass thorough them all, and ascend to the first Cause, and that first Cause that ens entium, that Source and Original of all Being, is God, and besides him there is none else; Jer. 10.11. The God's that have

not made the Heavens and the Earth, even they shall perish from the Earth, and from under these Heavens.

Tell them, that upon this God all things that are have an absolute and necessary dependence. The Beam doth not more depend upon the Sun, than the Sun and all do upon God; for them to subsist without him is a thing utterly impossible; if he should withdraw his hand, Man would crumble, Earth would sink, the Heavens would shrink, and the Angels themselves drop from their present height into that first nothing out of which they were fetched by the Divine Power.

Let them from you know, that they themselves are his Off-spring, and indebted to him for their Being, being by him formed in the Womb, and brought out of it; and that he hath looked after them, and taken care of them ever since: when they hung upon the Breasts, he carried them in his Arms, and taught them to go, and held their Souls in Life, and provided for them ever since, and therefore they are not their own but his, he hath the Sovereign Right to them, and to Reign over them; and that upon this account they are bound to love this God, and to fear this God, and to serve and honor him as long as they have any Being.

Acquaint them with his being a holy God, in his Nature, in his Will, in all his Ways and Works, glorious in Holiness, and of purer Eyes than that he can behold Iniquity; and that he hath given out a Law that is holy, just and good, which they and all are bound to obey, the Commandments of it not being grievous.

And that he is everywhere present, observing how his Will is observed, and his Law obeyed, and his Creatures order and demean themselves; he takes notice both of the Evil and the Good, of them that fear him, and them that fear him not, and doth so strictly observe, that he sets down in his Book of Remembrance those that

fear him, and think upon his Name, and can set the sins of the wicked in order before them, yea the same order in which they were committed, with all the circumstances that clothe them.

And that he hath appointed a day wherein he will Judge the World in Righteousness by the Man whom he hath ordained, and bring to light the hidden things of dishonesty, and render unto everyone according as their Works have been, whether good or evil; Rom. 2.7, 8, 9. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality. eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, indignation and wrath: Tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God. That he hath an Heaven for the good, no other than the Habitation of his own Holiness and Glory, in which there are many Mansions, and Crowns, and Thrones, with inconceivable Felicity; in his presence a fullness of Joy, and at his Right Hand Pleasures for evermore; and besides that, an Hell for the wicked, a bottomless Pit, where there is a gnawing Worm that shall never die, and a Fire burning that is unquenchable, in which they shall forever fry, scorch and burn without being ever consumed, and consequently they shall have weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth.

Secondly; Instruct them concerning the miserable, lost and undone condition of all Man-kind by reason of the Fall of the first Man.

That when God had formed Man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, so that he became a living Soul, he was pleased not only to make him upright and in his own Image, induing him with all Natural Excellencies and

Perfections befitting one who was to have Communion with his Creator, and Dominion over this Inferior World, and to put him into a state of Happiness, appointing Paradise for the place of his Residence, or Royal Seat; but also to enter into a Covenant of Friendship with him, thereby binding Man to a continuance in a course of Personal and Perfect Obedience to his great Lord, and thereupon by promise insuring to him an endless duration of his Life and Happiness, but withal threatening that in case of failure and disobedience, He should die the death; viz. Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal.

That this Covenant was not made with Adam alone, but with all Mankind who were to descend from him, and were considered as being then in his Loins, and He as the great Parent and common Person representing them, and so Adam breaking the Covenant by transgressing the Law of his Creation, and in particular, that positive Law which commanded him not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, All Mankind sinned in him, and fell with him in that first Transgression, and so all the World is become guilty before God, and obnoxious to his Justice and Wrath; all the World is become filthy and abominable. Primitive Righteousness is lost, and the Primitive Order broken, and we are all unclean; all of us by principle and disposition Children of disobedience, and all by Nature Children of Wrath.

And bring this home to them, and let them know that it is as much their Case as the case of any persons in the World, that they have the guilt of sin upon them, the sentence of Death denounced against them, a vile Heart and Nature within them, the Seed and Principle of all sin, which renders them prone to all manner of evils, even the vilest and most monstrous. This will tend to the hiding Pride from them, and preventing those high towering Conceits which they are

ready to hug and swell with through their self-unacquaintedness; this may awaken them to the greater vigilance and care, and bring them to keep a stricter Eye upon their hearts; and this may keep them from being much taken with, and doting upon those trifling childish vanities and youthful follies which the Souls of others are so much addicted and devoted to, while they hear there are things of infinitely greater importance and nearer concernment unto which they must attend.

Thirdly; Make it much your business to convince them of the evil of Sin. In order to their loathing it and themselves for it before God, do you, as much as you can, set it before them in its ugliness and deformity; look upon it in the Glass of God's Law, and of Christ's Blood, and then draw its picture and show it to them. History tells us, this of the Lacedemonians, that when they saw a filthy drunken Sott stagger and reeling in the Street, vomiting like a Dog, falling and tumbling in the Mire like a Swine, they would run into their houses, and fetch their young Children to the door, that they might behold how much he was unmanned, how like a Beast he made himself (and by the way know, it is far better to be a Beast than to be like a Beast ) that so they might betimes learn to abhor and detest that brutish practice. Do you do the like, I mean, make unto them a true representation of the odiousness of Sin in general, yea, and of some Sins in particular, specially those which are most rampant, raging, and abounding in the times in which they live, and those Sins too with which they are most in danger of being infected; paint them out in the blackest Colors that you can, as black as Hell, for indeed so they are. You cannot disparage Sin beyond its demerit; you cannot speak too bad of it; you cannot make it look worse than it is. As we cannot exceed nor rise too high in the commendation of God; our greatest words are too little, our highest thoughts are too low. Angelical conceptions of God are infinitely short of his Perfection. He

is exalted above all blessing and praise. So on the other side, we cannot speak too much in the dispraise of Sin; our greatest anger against Sin is not hot enough, and our sharpest words against Sin are not keen enough. There is not to be found so great an evil in all the World as Sin is.

Afflictions are not so bad as Sin. Poverty, Plague, Fire, Sword, Famine, all the desolations that be made in Towns, Cities, Countries, not matter of so great Lamentation as Sin. They are Physic to cure, this the Disease to destroy; they are Fire to purify, this is Filth to pollute. Death itself doth only kill the Body, Sin ruins the Soul. Death sends the Body to a Bed of Dust, but Sin, if unpardoned, unmortified, sends both Soul and Body into a Bed of Flames.

The Devil himself is not so bad as Sin: For he was an excellent Creature, a glorious Angel: There never was anything of goodness in Sin, nor ever will. He was the Workmanship of God himself, but God had no hand in the making of Sin. It was Sin that turned him into a Devil.

Hell is not so bad as Sin: For though it be a place of gross utter Darkness, yet there is seen the Purity and Holiness of God in his hatred of Sin, the Justice and Righteousness of God in the condemning and punishing of Sin; there he declares his Wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness; but there is no good, not the least good in Sin, it is a mere Anomia, disobedience to, and transgression of such a Law as is holy, just and good, it is evil throughout, only evil, and that continually.

Sin is evil in its Nature, being contrary to the pure, holy, infinitely perfect and glorious Nature of God. There is nothing in all the World contrary to God but Sin, and what Sin hath made so. Its Nature is so bad, that nothing can rectify it, nothing can mend it, nothing make it

good: It is so bad, that God would not allow it a place in Heaven; and the day is coming after which it shall be found no more upon Earth, but be forever confined and shut up in Hell.

Sin is evil in its Consequents and Effects. Indeed, who did ever gather Grapes of Thorns? How can any good Fruit grow upon this Root of bitterness? Let me briefly name some of those Mischiefs which Sin hath done, and still goeth on to do in the World.

1. Sin hath defaced the Beauty of Man, sullied and stained his Glory, thrown him down from his Excellency, turned the Nazarite into an Ethiopian; so that he, who at first was but a little lower than the Angels, is now become like unto the Beasts that perish, yea worse than they.

2. Sin hath spoiled Man's Communion with God, which was inconceivably more and better than the Delights of Eden, or his Dominion over the Creatures. As his Holiness did consist in his conformity to God, so did his Happiness in Communion with him; but as soon as he had committed Sin, that stood as a middle Wall of Partition between them.

3. Sin hath broken Man's Peace, that Peace which once he had with God, and sown Enmity: So that God is angry with him, and he a Traitor, a Rebel against God. That Peace which was once in himself: The faculties of his Soul were once harmonious, Reason sitting in the Throne, Judgment ruling and governing, the Will and Affections knowing, keeping their place, and following the Dictates of the Understanding, but now there is discord and jarring; the Understanding mistakes, the Will and Affections mutiny, so that frequently there are disorders and confusion in the Soul. And oh! How dismal are the Contests oftentimes between a Man and his Conscience; he crosseth his Conscience, and that will not bear it; he



wounds his Conscience, and then that rageth and storms, and lays about it as a fury; and wheresoever he goes, it follows him with its clamors, so that he becomes a terror to himself.

4. Sin hath brought in all the Troubles of Life. How many are they, and how great! Who can understand his Errors? Who can sum up his Sorrows? Most come into the World crying, and go complaining thorough it. In sorrow do Women bring forth Children; some are grieved because they have none, and some more, because those they have are so bad. How are the endeavors of many vain and unsuccessful, their hopes blasted, and their expectations disappointed! How are some wasted and consumed with sickness, others ground and tortured with pain! Now a Fire comes and devours your pleasant things, burying your Habitations in their own Ashes, and then a War, which knows no compassion, but turns fruitful Lands first into Fields of Blood, and then into Wildernesses.

5. Sin hath introduced Death, and Armed against us that King of Terrors. Had not Man made Sin his Work, he had never received Death for his Wages; had not Sin been, Man had either continued in a perfect and Paradisical State upon Earth, or else been translated into the Region of Light, and Life, and Love above; but now if ever he would come thither, he must walk through the dark Shades, and be dissolved in order to his being glorified. We now mourn over a dead Friend, a dead Relation, let us remember that Sin killed them, Rom. 5.12. By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned.

6. Sin hath digged Hell. This is that Tophet which is mentioned in Isa. 30.33, that is made deep and large, the Pile whereof is Fire and much Wood, the Breath of the Lord like a Stream of Brimstone doth kindle it. The Hell in the Conscience, which some Men do feel now,

and that Hell into which all wicked wretches shall be tumbled at the last, are both of them the fruit of Sin.

Now, my Friends, will you be careful in this matter? Will you consider, what Natures all brought into the World with them, how Sin dwells in you and yours? Oh! Show unto them the evil that is in it, and the mischiefs that come by it; for by doing so, you take a course to damp the Tinder that it may not catch Fire when the Spark is struck, and to arm them against Temptations, when they come out in their greatest violence; this will tend to the preserving them from the path of the Destroyer, though it be such a beaten Road, and so full of Travelers. This was the Antidote that secured Joseph from the Poison that was offered him in the Cup of Fornication. He was shrewdly assaulted, and that more than once; the on-set was renewed day by day, and he was in his youthful Blood, and on that account a great deal more in danger of being prevailed upon, and wrought to a compliance; but it was labor in vain, he looked upon the vile sinfulness of the thing, and that was more powerful to affright him from it, than the Charms of his Mistress were to allure him to it; and therefore with a ( Pathos, or) Zeal of Soul he cried out, Gen. 39.9. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? He saw such a filthiness in that Sin, as that he loathed to touch either it or her that had tempted him to it, but fled from them both.

Fourthly; Be much in acquainting them with our Lord Jesus Christ, and the way of ruined Man's recovery by him, and by him alone. He being the only Mediator between God and Man, and the only Redeemer of God's Elect. Let them know that by Nature, and by reason of Sin their case is extremely deplorable. When once our first Parents had transgressed, it was dark round about them; nothing offered itself to their Eye that had a promising aspect. God that had been before their chiefest comfort, was then their greatest terror; his

Voice that had been so sweet and pleasant to them, was then in their Ears like Thunder. As soon as Adam heard it, he was afraid and hid himself; but as deplorable as sinful lapsed Man's case is now, blessed be free and rich Grace, it is not desperate, unless he himself by obstinate impenitency and unbelief do make it so. There is hope in Israel concerning this thing, because all-sufficient help is laid upon One that is mighty.

1. Though God was greatly affronted by the work of his own hands whom he had so obliged, and by that affront had been so highly provoked, yet being a God of bowels, whose compassions do not fail, in wrath he remembered mercy; and though he had no yearnings over the sinning Angels, but immediately banished them from his presence, threw down from their first estate, and with indignation tumbled them into Hell, where he hath clapt upon them everlasting Chains, in which he reserves them to the Judgment of the great day, yet he had it in his hearty to pity and show kindness to fallen Man; it was the fixed resolve and purpose of his Grace to mend the marred Girdle, and to repair the broken Potsherds of the Earth, and of many among them to make Vessels of Honor fit for his Use and Service here, and for his Kingdom and Glory hereafter.

2. For that great and most blessed End he chose and sent his own Son, his only Son, his infinitely beloved Son, who was the brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person, Man not being in a capacity to help himself, nor all the Angels in Heaven able to relieve him; their back was too weak to bear that burden of guilt which lay upon him; and their whole Stock too little to discharge those Debts which he had contracted; and their Arm infinitely too short to reach him, and draw him out of that horrible Pit into which he had cast himself and all his Posterity. Now I say, when things were at this pass, God was pleased to send his Son to humble

himself, to empty himself, to become poor, to become our Brother, and to assume our Nature with its sinless infirmities, and to be in the form of a Servant, of no reputation, made under the Law, that he might fulfil all Righteousness, and be the End thereof for Righteousness to all that are found in him, and to be made sin for us, i.e. a Sacrifice for sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him; a Ransom, that he might be a Redeemer.

3. The Son of God being thus chosen by the Father and sent did come, he most readily and freely came in the fullness of Time, and according to the Counsel of Peace which had been between them both, he came to do the Will of God, he was incarnate, was manifest in the Flesh, yea in the likeness of sinful Flesh, and was numbered among Transgressors, the Iniquities of all his People were laid on him, and he did bear them in his own Body upon the Tree, becoming obedient to the Death, even the Death of the Cross; he did die, the Prince of Life did die, his Blood was shed, that therein might be opened a Fountain for Sin, and for Uncleanness.

4. Neither is there Salvation in any other; there is no other Name under Heaven by which Man may be saved, but his; no Blood by which he may be washed but his, nor Righteousness by which he may be justified but his; and therefore it is altogether in vain, mere lost labor to look for Salvation anywhere else: Whither shall we go, Lord? Said Peter, with Thee alone are the words of Eternal Life. And as it is in vain, so it is altogether needless; for Christ is able to save to the utmost all those that come unto God by him. Mark it, them that come unto God by him, them without exception, all them, one and another, be they never so many, and be they what they will, never so bad, he is able to save them, and that completely, to the full perfection of Salvation, to the utmost of their dangers, to the utmost of their desires, to the utmost of Eternity, he is the Author of Eternal

Salvation unto all them that obey him; and truly be that hath a Salvation which will reach as far as Eternity, doth not, will not need one any longer.

5. This Salvation doth come most freely from him to all those that humbly seek it, Zech. 9.9. Behold thy King cometh unto thee, he is just, having Salvation. He comes to poor Sinners, and brings his Salvation with him. He once came into the World in Person, to work Salvation for them, he still comes by his word and Spirit to bring Salvation to them. We before said, he is able to save, and he is full out as willing as able; Oh! That lost ruined Sinners were as willing to accept Salvation, as he is to bestow it; indeed what should hinder his being willing, all the charge is over, it did cost him a great deal, but it will cost him no more, no more blood, no more sweat, no more tears, no more sighs, no more sorrow or shame: it is having the joy that was set before him, it is seeing the fruit of the travel of his Soul, that will issue in his satisfaction. It is but his own taking possession of that which he purchased for himself, and giving his People possession of that which he purchased for them. Hence we have reason to conclude that his heart is in the work, and that he doth it with joy and delight; be much and often in speaking to your Families concerning this most sweet and precious Jesus, and the good will which he bears to the Children of Men. How he stands with his gracious arms stretched out to receive and embrace them that are willing to accept of him, and of Salvation, upon the terms propounded in the Gospel, and hath given us his faithful word for it, which he can no more deny, than he can deny himself, that whosoever cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out, though' he hath been never so vile, though his Sins have been never so great, yet if he will but come, he shall find Grace to welcome him, and meet with a most kind reception; he will spread his skirt over him for the covering of his shame and nakedness, and his wings too for the security of his Person, and the healing of his wounds.

5. Carefully instruct them about the Covenant of Grace, that there is a twofold Covenant.

1. A Covenant of Works.

2. A Covenant of Grace.

A Covenant of Works, which had Grace in it upon this account, that God should deal in a Covenant way with Man, which he needed not to have done. He was Mans Creator, gave him his being, and therefore was his undoubted and Sovereign Lord, and might have proceeded with him altogether in a way of Sovereignty, exacting obedience of him, and let him refuse it or fail in it at his peril. It was a gracious condescension in God to act in a Covenant-way, and oblige himself to reward man for his obedience, this is called a Covenant of Works, because therein Life was promised to Man upon the terms of his personal perfect obedience, and his perseverance therein. Now this Covenant was transgressed and broken by our first Parents, soon after that it was made; so that no good, no happiness is to be hoped for from it, by us, or by another; the Penalty indeed threatened, upon the breach thereof may be most righteously exacted, and so it will of all those who are found guilty, and continue still under it, not having fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hopes set before them, i.e. not having closed with Christ, and by Faith taken Sanctuary in him, but no life is to be had by it, the Law cannot justify because it is grown weak through the flesh, Rom. 8.3, weak to the purpose of justification, and this was by accident, through Mans fault, Mans weakness is the reason of the Laws weakness, the Law was able to have justified innocent perfect Man, but it cannot justify lapsed sinful Man. *Homo est impotens ad praestandam legem, Lex ei Vires dare non potest*; Man is too weak to perform the Law, and the Law cannot give him strength. In a word, Man being now fallen,

corrupted, enfeebled, and throughout depraved, he cannot possibly keep the Law, and therefore that cannot justify him.

But there is another Covenant, rightly called a better Covenant, which God hath been pleased to make better for us as the case stands, for it containeth in it better Promises, Heb. 8.6, and is in the hand of a Mediator Jesus Christ our fast Friend, a Covenant by which David saw all his Salvation secured, and in which he summed up all his desire, knowing it to be everlasting, ordered in all things, and sure, 2 Sam. 23.5.

In this Covenant (as in all) there is a mutual stipulation, it hath its requiries, and its promises, by it Man is engaged to believe in Jesus Christ with all his heart, to accept of him, and close with him as he is by the Father and himself offered in the Gospel, to receive him in all his Offices, as Prophet, to Teach, and as King, to Govern, and Command, as well as Priest to Atone, and Intercede and Bless; and thereupon it promiseth Salvation, it requires repenting of Sin, and forsaking it; and thereupon it promiseth Mercy, and the blotting out of Transgressions, it requires returning to God, and the performance of sincere obedience, and to everyone that doth so, God engageth himself to be their God, for this is a Covenant of Reconciliation, he engageth to pardon their Sins so fully, so abundantly, that they shall be as if they had never been, white as Snow, and to receive them into favor, and to love them with an everlasting love, and to give them grace, and glory, Crowning at length, and satisfying them with happiness.

All those that have not laid hold upon, and are not in this Covenant of Grace, are to this day under the Covenant of Works, and so in a state of Damnation; and all those that are in the Covenant of Grace, must come up to the terms of it. Let Men in this erroneous, teachie,

froward, quarrelsome Age say what they will, and make never so much noise, the Covenant of Grace hath its Conditions, though blessed be God, what it requires it gives, and we must carefully look that we come up to the terms of it, and that there be in us an answerableness to its requiries, if ever we would share in the blessings of it. He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned; repent, and your Sins shall be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, but except ye repent, ye shall all perish. Christ will be the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that they obey him, but he shall at the Great Day be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel. And then it will appear, that Obedience and Holiness are something, that to fear the offending of God, and a diligent care of pleasing him, were other manner of things than many mistaken Persons do now take them to be. Let your Families know that impenitency doth bind upon Men and Women the guilt of all their Sins, and that without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, and that Christ came to save from Sin, as well as Wrath, and to Redeem, not only from Hell, and Condemnation, but likewise from a vain and vicious Conversation, 1 Pet. 1.18.19.

Sixthly, Frequently put those who are Members of your Families, and under your charge, in mind of their being in Covenant with God, and of their having been Baptized, and so received the Seal or Token of the Covenant, inculcate this in your Discourses with them. I hope that all your Children and Servants (to you I now speak, who are Members of this numerous Congregation) have been made Partakers of that great and precious Ordinance, and you ought to tell them of it again, and again, for by that means you may do them much good, in making them serious and thoughtful; let them know from you, that they were not by their Parents left at liberty to choose whether they



would be the Lord's, or not, whether they would serve him, or not, whether they would bow their necks to the yoke of Christ, or be the Sons and Daughters of Belial. But their Parents, whose they were, and who had a right to dispose of them, did, in conscience of their own duty, and in dear love to them, bind them to God betimes, they did devote and consecrate them to God, they did as it were, Seal Indentures between them, and God; so that now they are God's Covenant People, his Covenant Servants.

And tell them that being in Covenant with God, they shall have all the good of the Covenant, all the Mercies and Blessings of it, in case they do not deal falsely therein; they may rejoice in it, as that which is security enough, they may live upon it, and that comfortably in the worst times, and they may plead it with God, and say with David, remember thy word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

But that it will be sad and dreadful for them to sin against it, I mean willfully, sins in them are of a deeper die, and have a louder voice than the Sins of others in the World, and by them God is justly more provoked: merely to break one of God's Commandments is nothing near so bad as to break Covenant with God, that is an accent upon the head of Sin, and doth greatly aggravate it; and those Persons that are guilty thereof, may expect, and with trembling think how severe God will be at last, and what fierce wrath he will pour out upon them, when he comes to avenge the quarrel of his Covenant. Labor to convince them what a dismal thing it would be for them to withdraw themselves from God, whose they were by Covenant; for them who had been in their Infancy by their Parents given up to God, now to run cross to them, and to null what they had done as much as in them lies, and to give up themselves to Sin, and to the Devil, and to sell themselves to do evil; this is a throwing dirt in the face of their

Parents, as if they had chosen ill for them, and bound them to a bad Trade, and an hard Master; and this is a reproach to God, as if he had been a Wilderness to them, and a Land of Darkness, and they had found iniquity upon him, and this cannot but be an high provocation, and must needs raise storms of wrath and fury.

Seventhly, Be very much and often commending to them the Service of God, and the Yoke of Jesus Christ, that they may not be prejudiced by wrong notions, nor misled by misapprehensions of him, as the unprofitable Servant pretended to be, who looking upon his Lord as Austere, and made up altogether of Severity, therefore would do nothing for him, but even buried his Talent in a Napkin. That God's Service is perfect Freedom, and then do Men and Women walk at liberty, when they keep his Precepts. Whereas the Service of Sin is no better than Slavery, and its work a drudgery; the Sweet-Meats of Sin are wrapped up in a Curse, and its most pleasant ways lead down to the Chambers of Death. Whereas the Yoke of Christ is easy, being lined with Love, and his Burthen is light, having both Wings, and the Shoulder of God to help them to bear it. In the service of Sin a poor Creature spends all at his own cost like the poor Israelites under Pharaoh, and his Cruel Task-Masters, who were not only forced to make Brick, but likewise to find Straw to make it with, and then the Wages given at last will be death. Whereas God doth cut out Work for his Servants, and give them strength to do it, he chalks out their way, and enlargeth their hearts to run it, he giveth power to the faint, when they have none of their own, he supplies them with enough, so that Paul said, He could do all things through Christ's strengthening him.

Show to them the reasonableness of the Law of God, which hath been given out to Man for the Directory of his Life, and the Rule of his Actions, that it is pure, and perfect, and worthy both of our

obedience, and our Love, yea, doth and will afford great, singular delight to a person of a right frame and constitution; and well it may, seeing the Law is holy, and the Commandments holy, just, and good, Rom. 7.12. It is such a Law was fit for God to give, and fit for Man to receive; it being purity throughout, and is suitable to the Nature of God, who is an Infinite, Holy, and Righteous Being. It was also suitable to the Nature of Man, possible, easy, pleasant to him before he was degenerate, corrupt, and depraved. Let us run through the Commandments, and at the first view it will appear they are not grievous, as the beloved Disciple saith, 1 John 5.3.

What can be more reasonable than that we should have and own, love and trust in, fear and serve him for our God, and him only who is God indeed, and God alone, besides whom there is none else? What could with greater reason be forbidden, than the making of any Graven Image, or the likeness of anything which is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Waters under the Earth, so as to fall down and Worship them? For what can be more ridiculous, than to give Divine Honor to that which Man himself gave being to? What more gross and egregious nonsense, than to call that a God, part of which is consumed in the fire? Is it not reasonable that we all should sanctify the name of God, and not profane it nor take it in vain, and that we should cheerfully spend some time in his Service, who is the great Lord of time, and keep holy the Sabbath Day, laying out that seventh part of time which he hath chosen and sanctified, and set apart for himself in his service and Worship? What exceptions can be made against Honoring our Fathers, and Mothers; Children's honoring their Parents, Servants their Masters and Mistresses, Inferiors their Superiors, Subjects their Governors? What more just than that Men should not kill others by violence, nor themselves by intemperance, and excess; nay, that they should not hate one another, nor be angry without a cause, nor too much, nor too long?

What also can be with reason objected against that Law of God, which forbids Rapine, Theft, Robbery, Adultery, and all Uncleanness, all Reviling, Slandering, Backbiting, and bearing false witness against our Neighbors, and also coveting those things which are not our own, but commandeth us to sit down contented with those things which we have, whether they be more or less, till God shall please to carve out for us a larger and more liberal allowance. Surely as to all these things, save only the seventh part of time, the light of Nature would dictate and lead to the practice of them. Reason itself doth suggest and teach, that to be religious, righteous, good, temperate, chaste, kind, meek, humble, and lowly, is fit for Men; it highly becomes them, and doth greatly conduce and contribute to their honor, and peace, and prosperity, to their welfare and comfort every way; these things give them boldness, make their faces shine, and commend them to all that know them. But on the other side, injustice, oppression, disobedience, drunkenness, uncleanness, theft, lying, subornation, perjury, false witness, swearing, debauchery, and profaneness of all sorts do offend Heaven, and Earth, they tend to the dishonor and displeasing of God, and to the undoing of Persons, and Families, yea, to the ruin of Societies, and Kingdoms, and the whole World, for these things sake the wrath of God comes down upon the Children of disobedience. To shut up this particular, let them know, there is none of God's Commandments but what doth evidently and directly make for Mans own good, it tends to the preserving of his Name, that it may be like precious Ointment, without a dead Flye in it, and of his Life, that his days may be long in the Land, and of his Health, that his life may be comfortable as well as long; and of his Estate, that that may prosper and increase, and not be blasted with a Curse, and so consume and melt like Snow before the Sun, they have a benign and kind influence upon Mans whole interest, Godliness being profitable for all things, for Soul, Body, and Calling, for Time, and Eternity, for the Life that now is,

and for that which is to come; and there is nothing can be named, by which we can possibly so much promote our own good, as by a cordial and constant respect to all God's Commandments; we shall not then be ashamed nor repent. Oh! How sweet and pleasant will it be when we can in truth say with holy Paul, Herein do we exercise ourselves, to keep a Conscience void of offense both toward God and toward Man, Acts 24.16.

Eighthly; Acquaint them with the present Advantages that come by Religion, and a conscientious performance of Duty. God's Israel have their Manna now, and their Clusters by the way, in the Wilderness, as well as a Land flowing with Milk and Honey at the last. As there are some drops before the Storm, so First-fruits before the Harvest. David saith, God's Commandments are right and true, more to be desired than Gold, much fine Gold, sweeter also than Honey and the Honey-comb, and that in keeping them there is great reward, Psal. 19.11. There is Meat in the very Mouth of duty; he doth not say, there shall be a great reward, though that is true, it shall be in Heaven, but there is so. God is now a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and are careful to obey him; his Servants shall not stay for all, but have something down, the Feast is to come, but there are foretastes at present. We frequently see that Sin doth carry its punishment along with it. Soon after Cain had killed his Brother, the Innocent Blood cried, and Judgment was in part Executed. Quickly after Judas had played the Traitor, God made him his own Executioner. While Belshazzar was impiously Carousing in the Vessels of the Sanctuary, there was a Hand-writing upon the Wall, and that very Night was he slain. So God hangs up some Notorious Criminals, as it were in Chains, in terrorem, that others might be warned and frightened, and some restraint laid upon, and bounds set to wickedness, which would otherwise overflow all, and that some order might be preserved and kept up in the World.

On the other side, God doth even in this Life frequently reward good Men, and both give them Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Things, and outward Blessings in Earthly Things, thereby making it evident to all that have Eyes in their Heads and will observe, that it is not in vain to fear God. And though his upright Job 's are not so sordidly Mercenary as to serve him merely for hire, yet he is so infinitely good and gracious that they shall not serve him for naught; but while they walk before him in their Integrity, and make it their desire and endeavor to please, and obey him, he watcheth over them with a never-slumbering Eye, and takes special Fatherly Care of them, and doth them good; they have peace in their Breasts, and Families, protection about them and all that they have, and also Food convenient for them, a supply of all their need. And though some others of his People who are dear unto him, and exceeding precious in his sight, have but little, a very little of this Worlds Goods, but from Hand to Mouth, yet they can be cheerful, sitting down to a Dinner of Herbs, and eat them with a merry Heart, giving God thanks, because they know they have the love of God in it, and the Blessing of God with it, and by consequence that little which they have is better than the Riches and great Revenues of many wicked; their Brown Bread is better than the others Venison, which is peppered hot with a Curse, and their Cup of cold Water is better than the others most generous Wine, because the Wrath of God is dropped into it, and all shall at last be dearly paid for, when Divine Justice shall bring in the Reckoning.

Show them that the Service of God, and a care to please him, is the way to get the good things of the World, both the Creatures, and the Comfort of them; for, as we before said, Godliness hath the Promises of this Life, i.e. both of Life itself, and what doth appertain to it. And as it is the Blessing of God that maketh Rich, so his Blessing is upon his People, upon them, and only upon them. Others have no Interest

in the Promise, and therefore cannot lay claim to the Blessing, nor groundedly expect and hope for it. Profane Esau would fain have had the Blessing, he asked it, he begged it, he wept for it, but alas! It was gone before, Isaac had past it to his Brother Jacob, and he was not to be altered; Esau had contemned the Birthright, and sold it for a Mess of Pottage, and therefore he should not have the Blessing: He found in his Father no place for Repentance, although he sought it carefully with Tears: Profaneness excludes from the Blessing.

But withal, take some pains with them, yea, do all that you can to keep their Hearts from being engaged to the World, and their Affections from being wedded and devoted to these sublunary Enjoyments; do not commend to them fine Clothes, gorgeous Attire, and outward Bravery, that is the way to make them proud, but the Robe of Righteousness, a putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ by Faith and Imitation, and a being clothed with Humility. Do not commend to them earthly Riches, which reach not the Soul, which are uncertain, and take unto themselves Wings and flee away, leaving the poor Owner in a worse condition than they found him but commend to them the good part that shall never be taken from them, the Riches of Faith, and an Interest in the Promises. Not worldly Grandeur, which is so slippery, nor high places from which so many tumble, and fall, and break their Necks; but great goodness, great measures of Faith and Holiness, great serviceableness in their several places; labor to convince them of the littleness, and vanity, and nothingness of those things which the bewitched worldlings do so madly dote upon, and so idolatrously hug, and pursue still after with so much eagerness, as if they could never have enough; and indeed let them get never so much of them, they will never find enough in them, but in the fullness of their sufficiency they will be in straits, Job 20.22. Such Men are in straits during that fullness of sufficiency; though they have abundance they do not think it enough,

their condition is high, and their outward comforts are large, but their spirits are too big for their condition, and so they are pinched and pained like a Gouty Foot in a narrow and little Shoe. And many times God chooseth that as his Season, for the making both his Power and Anger known upon them; when they are at the full they are eclipsed, when their Cup runs over, he empties them, when they stand strutting and vapping as Nebuchadnezzar in his Palace, Is not this great Babylon which I have built; then Divine Providence trips them up, and lays their Honor in the Dust.

Turn away their Eyes from beholding these Vanities, and direct them to more noble and amiable Objects that do better deserve their Love, and will require it at a greater rate; make them to know there are other manner of Beauties and Glories to be had, and therefore to be sought and looked after, those Riches and Honor which are with Wisdom, durable Riches and Righteousness, Prov. 8.18. Tell them that one Drachm of Saving Grace is better than Thousands of Gold and Silver; that Christ is better than Creatures, God better than all the World, and his Favor than Life, his Smiles than the brightest Sun-shine; therefore Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt, and rather chose to suffer affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a Season, Heb. 11.25, 26. And David counted one day in God's Courts better than a Thousand elsewhere, and would rather be a Door-keeper in the House of his God, than dwell in the Tents of Wickedness.

Once more convince them, if it be possible, that beginning with God is beginning at the right end, this is the best method, and will be most successful. To set our Affections upon things above is the directest and most compendious way of attaining those things which are here below. Let a Man make sure of Christ, and he may very well



trust God with all his outward concerns. The Lord is my shepherd; let that be the Proposition, and then, I shall not want, is a good conclusion by no means to be denied, Psal: 23.1, whereas setting Affections upon things below is the way to miss of those things which are above. Dunghill-rakers do not find the Pearl of Price. Saul indeed seeking the Asses, lighted upon the Kingdom, but I think the Bible affords not such another instance. Paul tells us, Destruction is the end of those whose God is their belly, and who mind earthly things. Minding earthly things as the chiefest good is the high way to Beggary and Ruin in the end. They that will be rich fall into Temptation, and not seldom under Heart-wounding, Heart-breaking Disappointments. Our dear Lord Jesus, who is the faithful and true Witness, and the wisest Counselor, hath given us excellent Advice commended by a sure and comfortable Promise; Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you, Mat. 6.33. All these things added? Yes, so far as your Heavenly Father sees them necessary for you, nay more, so far as he seeth them good for you; no good thing shall he withhold; and truly that is far enough, farther than so they are not to be desired, farther than so they are not worth the having.

Lastly; In your Families, and among them who are committed to your Charge, direct your Speech very much to the great things of the other World, and that recompense of Reward which is to come. God took Abram after Lot was separated from him, and said to him, lift up now thine Eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the Land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever, Gen. 13.14, 15. So do you take the Members of your Families, and bid them lift up their Eyes, and look off from this dirty World, up to that glorious Canopy over their Heads, the Firmament bespangled with Sun, Moon and Stars; that is but the Floor or Pavement of the

Presence Chamber of the King of Glory, the Bride-Chamber of the Lamb, the Seat of the Blessed, which he will give for an Everlasting Inheritance unto them who have chosen, and love, and obey him. Be often and often discoursing to them of Heaven, the Company there, the Employment there, the Felicity and Satisfaction there, the Vision and Fruition that the Saints shall have there of God and Christ, whom they shall see not as in a Glass darkly, but Face to Face, the sweet Fellowship and Communion they shall there have with God in the greatest Intimacy, without the least disturbance or interruption; there being no sinful withdrawing's from God on their part, and no angry withdrawing's from them on God's part, and no Enemy to divert the Mind, or break the Peace, or abate the Delight, but a fullness of Joy they shall have in the presence of their God and Savior, and at his Right Hand Pleasures for evermore. Let them know what you can of the greatness of those Preparations which he hath made for them that love and fear him, even such things as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath entered into the Heart of Man. There is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for them. As there are all dimensions in the love which Christ bears to them, height, depth, length, and breadth; so there are in that Happiness and Glory which he hath prepared for them.

Mind them of the nature of this their present Life, that it is but transitory, in a continual flux, we die daily; look how much we have lived, so much we are already dead; our Candle is burning down into the Socket, and the Oil of our Lamp spends apace; not a Day, Hour nor Minute passeth over our Heads but it bringeth us nearer to our Grave, which is the House of all the Living; and unto it we are continually travelling. It is a troublesome Life; sin deserves it should be a lamentation throughout, and God might make it so; however they will find it checkered; be their Morning never so fair and serene,

yet their Day will be overcast before Night comes; and though at the first setting out they have a pleasant Gale, yet they must expect to meet with many a furious Storm before they come into their Harbor. Children come crying into the World, Men and Women go sighing thorough it, and groaning out of it. Many are the afflictions of the very righteous, though God will deliver them out of all. It is an uncertain Life. Who knows what is in the Womb of Providence, or what may be the product of a day? We are but short-sighted, and cannot tell what stands at the Door, ready to draw the Latch. Samson found Honey in the Carcass of a Lion, but many find Wormwood and Gall in the very Hive where they expected Honey, and what they did hope would have been their greatest comfort doth prove their bitterest vexation, their greatest torment; and what wise Man would take up with such a Life, since a better may be made sure of? But again, this is but a short Life, a span long, three or fourscore Years to come seem a great while, but when past, they are as a Tale that is told. Few and evil, said good Jacob, have the days of the years of my Pilgrimage been; and truly, since sin and sorrow do make them evil, it is a Mercy that God doth make them few. But since our Lives are short, we should not be covetous, for a little will serve the turn, a little will serve to carry us through our Journey. See that there be but Oil in the Vessel against the Bridegroom's coming, and then it is no great matter though there is but a little Meal in the Barrel, let them have their Bellies filled with hid Treasures whose Portion is in this Life; let them hunt after great things here, who are to have their good things, their all here.

But insisteth much among them upon that Life which is to come, that will know no end, but hath an Eternal duration. O, Eternity, Eternity, mayest thou strike us all with astonishment, and fill our Souls with an awful regard. There will be another state into which we must everyone pass at death, that will be unalterable, a state that is

altogether a stranger to hope, or to fear, that will know nothing to abate its sorrows, or to lessen its comforts; that hath either Meridian brightness without any obscuring shade, or scorching Flames without the least refreshing drop; such a state as will be either inconceivably Happy, or unspeakably Miserable, and that to all everlasting. The Blessed shall from their height of Bliss look down without any danger of falling, and the Damned shall in their Abyss of Misery and Woe look up without any possibility of rising. So Abraham told the Rich Glutton in Hell, Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.

Now as there is a double end, so there is a double way leading to them. That way which leads to Life is a narrow way, and the Gate strait, there is not room enough for a Man and his Lusts, Nature must be curbed, and the Flesh Crucified, and the Body kept under, and self-denied. That way which leads to Hell is broad, and the Gate wide; there a Man may take with him his Sins, and his Pleasures, he may fare deliciously every day, and be wicked every day; he may live without God in the World, and have Fellowship with Devils, and fulfil the Wills of the Flesh. He need not care what he doth, who doth not care what becomes of him. Well, assure them of this, that Sin ushers in Misery, and the ways of Sin go down to death, its steps take hold of Hell; but a Life of Holiness and Duty, a Life of Faith and Obedience to God carrieth to Heaven and the Happiness above. Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright; see the last of him, for the end of that man is peace: Though the way have its difficulties, an up-hill way that calls for great pains and labor; though it be hedged up with Thorns, and lined with Enemies, yet it hath a good end. The good Servant that Trades with his Talent, minds his business, and is faithful in his little, shall be made Ruler over much; and when he hath finished his work enter into the Joy of his Lord. The Reward

will be sure and great, what will both issue in abundant satisfaction, and raise the highest admiring's; so that the glorified Soul shall think, and say as David did upon another account, O Lord, who and what are all my services, and what my Fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto.

Bring them by degrees to understand something of what it is to behold God's Face in Righteousness, and to be satisfied with his Likeness; to lie at the Fountain-head of Happiness, and to delight ones self in the bottomless, boundless Ocean of Goodness. How pleasant it will be to reflect upon the troubles of the past Life, the violent Storms they passed through, the scorns and abuses of a foolish and mad World, the rage and fury of wicked, unreasonable Men, and what a change is made; how ill it was, how well it is; how sweet it must needs be to be above the reach of all sorrows and wants, of all Enemies and fears, and to be encompassed, feasted filled with the best and choicest delights. What a privilege will it be to sit down as welcome Guests with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God at a Feast of Glory, there to take your fill of Love to all Eternity, when you shall see so many shut out? What an Honor will it be to sit upon Christ's Throne? How easy to lie in the Bosom of Abraham? How comfortable to be ever with the Lord? How infinitely is this beyond all the Pleasures that Sin can afford its Votaries, beyond having the Belly filled with hid Treasures? Will you do this, you that are Governors of Families? Oh! How good is it! How much your Duty, and how much good may you do! This is the way to render them serious and thoughtful, the way to make Sin odious and abominable to them, so that they shall not desire to taste of those Dainties, this is the way to commend Godliness and Religion to them, so that they shall be like the Chariots of Amminadab; this also is the way to blunt the edge, and break the force of a Temptation, when it would at any time draw them away from God, and take them

off from the performance of that duty which they owe unto him. I will here add these two things, and desire you to put them in practice, in order to the rendering these Instructions or Teachings the more effectual.

First; Go over with these things again and again; and insist much upon them; yea, though they be unwilling to hear, yet be not you weary of speaking; nay, though they cast your words behind their Backs, do you still follow them with more. The Prophet Ezekiel was to continue speaking to the People of Israel, though they were a Rebellious House, nor might he be silent till God shut up his Mouth, and struck him Dumb; so must you do with your Families; though they be dull and slow to learn, yet teach; though they be obstinate and stiff necked, yet counsel and persuade; let there be frequent repetitions of the same Truths, and the same Advice, and the same Arguments. *Gutta cavat lapidem.* Drops of Rain often falling make an impression upon a Stone. Immortal Souls are so exceeding precious, that the gaining, the saving of one is worth the labor of a Life. How long did God wait upon you? And how often did he speak to you before you would hear; do you the like to yours. As Children must be often fed, so they must be often taught. Precept must be upon Precept, and Line upon Line, here a little and there a little.

The understandings of young ones are weak, and therefore you must deal with them in all plainness, and by degrees. They are like narrow mouthed Bottles, not receptive of much at a time, and you cannot pour in much at once, but by little and little. Drop in Truths, Counsels, and Instructions into them according to their ability to receive them. Their Memories also are labile and slippery, too tenacious of bad things, but not of the best, like Sieves that let the Flower go, and only retain the Bran; as they are not capable of receiving much at once, so but weak in keeping that which they have

received. The Apostle saw cause of writing thus to the Hebrews, Ye have forgotten the Exhortation which speaks to you as unto Children, Heb. 12.5. It is certain there is too much of this to be found among Men, grown Men, yea, grown Saints; we read the Word, and forget what we read; we hear Sermons, and forget the Sermons we hear, we forget the Promises we make, and the Mercies we receive, and the Experiences we have had of the power, care, and goodness of God. Men and Women are apt to forget Truths, Precepts, Counsels and Exhortation; we did stand in need of an Ordinance; the blessed Sacrament to put us in mind of Christ himself; and it is no wonder then if young ones be so, their Memories are leaking Vessels, and those impressions which are made upon their Minds and Affections do quickly wear out again; and therefore there is an absolute necessity of our going over with the same things again; upon this account, as well as that of the backwardness and great natural averseness of their wills from that which is good, daily Instructions are as needful for them as their daily Bread.

Secondly; Back your holy Instructions with holy Exhortations; and let all your gracious Counsels be followed and pressed upon them with earnest persuasions and entreaties, and so give forth and accompany the light with a due measure of heat, by that means endeavoring to work upon their Hearts as well as upon their Heads, that you may bring them to the knowledge of the Truth, yea, and to a receiving it in the love thereof; to an understanding of the way wherein they ought to go, and likewise to a sincere desire and fixed resolution, through Divine Assistance of walking therein. Whatsoever there is of wholesome and gracious Counsel which you apply to them, be sure to chafe it in with a warm Hand; it is sad to think how coldly some Ministers preach, so that their Auditors may sit and freeze under them; and also how some speak of God, and the things of God in their Houses, as if they were not concerned in them,

or rather, as if they were ashamed of them; do you so discourse of these things, as become those who believe yourselves, and are affected yourselves, and do-know the Terrors of the Lord, and are indeed in good earnest; do what you can to convince them of these two things.

First; That you have a high esteem and valuation of Religion, and all that appertains and belongs to it. The Truths of God, and the Ordinances of God, and the Day of God, and the Ways of God, that you do not look upon these things as trivial matters, of none, or but little importance, but of a more excellent nature and higher concernment than anything else in the World. Again, manage these Exhortations with so much prudence, love, and fervor, as that they may be convinced.

Secondly; That you are really and heartily set for the doing of them good; and that your great aim is as the approving of yourselves to God in the conscientious and faithful discharge of your duty, so the doing of them good, and the promoting of the Spiritual and Eternal welfare of their Souls; and herein imitate David 's example in the counseling of his Son Solomon, 1 Chron. 28.9. And thou Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever. So much may suffice to be by me spoken as to these parts of your duty, Family-Prayer, and Family-Instruction; the good Lord grant that what hath been declared and proved to be your duty may be forthwith and always put in practice by everyone whose duty it is.



## V.

### Counsel in the Right Directing of your Families.

I now proceed to the third part of that Counsel which I purposed and promised to give unto you who are the Parents and Governors of Families; and Oh! Let it be acceptable to you, and prevalent with you. It is this, Look wisely and carefully to your own Carriages and Conversations, and be sure that you order them aright; be circumspect, curious, exact, think not that you may do what you please, but labor to do what you should; what becomes both your place and your profession; in Psal. 123.2, the Prophet speaks of the Eyes of Servants looking to the hands of their Masters, and the Eyes of a Maiden looking unto the hand of her Mistress, for direction and supply, for help and assistance. I may likewise say, the Eyes both of Children and of Servants are and will be upon the Lives and Actions of their Father and Mother, of their Master and Mistress, and therefore your Eyes should be very much upon yourselves, and I count it your wisdom and duty to weigh the words you speak in their hearing, and the actions you do in their sight, as well as in the hearing and sight of any other graver and greater Persons. Never think it enough to speak to them good things, as long as you set before them bad examples; for they will sooner do as you do than as you say. *Praecepta docent, exempla trahunt*; Precepts do but teach, Examples draw. This was Christ's manner of teaching, he said, Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly. Learn this by my Doctrine, yea, and by my Disposition also; in his Mind, Life and Death, he sets us an example that we should tread in his steps; and since that was his way of teaching it should be ours. That was a good saying, Oh! That it were at this day true of all those upon whom the Name of God is

called. Non magna loquimur sed magna vivimus; we do not only speak great things, but we live great things; we speak of Christ, and we live Christ; we speak of the Gospel, and we live the Gospel; we profess Godliness, yea, and we practice Godliness; know for certain, it is your practicing that which is good, that is the best and most probable way of commending it to others; by this means they may be induced to believe that Religion is not mere notion but a reality; that it is a thing practicable, yea, and that it is pleasant. It is your drawing up in your own lives a beautiful, lovely Picture of Religion, that is the most likely way to make them full in love with it, and make it your business to see to it that there be as few spots in it as possible; for however some vain Persons do absurdly think spots in their Faces are their Ornaments, and set them off; yet sure all will believe and grant that spots in the Life are blemishes, and a mere deformity. Hence it is that Wives are commanded to carry as becomes them in their Conjugal Relation, Being in subjection to their own Husbands, and of a chaste conversation coupled with fear, that if any do not obey the word, they may without the word be won by the conversations of their Wives, 1 Pet. 3.1, 2. And this, Oh! This is that which I would gladly have among all upon whom the Name of Christ is called; as for the wicked and profane of the Age, if they hate to be reformed, and are resolved upon their way, they may go on. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still, Rev. 22.11. Yes, if he will, let him, and see what will come of it. But, I say, as for Professors, let them live up to the Principles of their Religion, let them abstain from all appearance of evil, let their Conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ, and in all things adorn the Doctrine of our God and Savior, let your Conversation be a God-honoring Conversation, and a World-condemning Conversation, and a Soul-winning Conversation; Oh! The good that might by this be done, how much might the Credit and Honor of Religion be retrieved, which hath sunk and lost so much in this

Degenerate, Atheistical, and Wicked Generation in which there is nothing more common, though most unjust, than for vile Wretches to take up all the dirt which they find in the Lives of some Professors, and throw it in the Face of our glorious Religion? But woe be to the Men and Women who give the occasion, and by whom the offense cometh, it had been better for them they had never been Born. Woe to the Men and Women that pray in their Families, and then contradict their own Prayers by an unsuitable Conversation, that give very wholesome Counsel and Advice, but live quite contrary to it. What these Men Build with one hand, they pull down with the other; these are the Persons that do Religion a mischief; through them it is that the Name of God is Blasphemed among others, Rom. 2.24. Therefore here also I will give you some Directions, and desire you carefully to follow them.

First; Look to it that you be of an unblameable Conversation. I know that while you are here you cannot be altogether sinless. Paul groaned under a Body of Death, but he could not get rid of it; but if you will walk so wisely and circumspectly as you ought, and have power to do, you may be blameless; Daniel was so, so accurate in the management of himself, so true to his trust, that though his great Preferment drew upon him the Envy of the Court, and his high Place rendered him the more conspicuous and visible, and those that were his Enemies watched him narrowly, yet they despaired of finding any occasion against him, save in the matter of his God, Dan. 6.5. He would break the Laws of Men when they did cross the Law of God, and that was his Duty, and still will be his Honor.

It is an excellent thing, that which nearly, greatly concerns us all, so to carry as that our own Consciences may not blame us; one of which is more than a Thousand Witnesses, and will be a greater evidence; see that you do not arm them against you, that they do not reproach

you; this was Paul 's daily care and study; his constant Employment and Exercise, to keep his Conscience void of offense, Acts 24.16, he would by no means offend his Conscience, nor give it any cause of chiding and being angry with him.

It is also highly our Interest so to carry as that God may not blame us at the last; that he may not reproach us when we come to appear in open Court before Angels, Men, and Devils, and to be Tried for our Lives, and Sentence as to our Eternal State; that God may not say, You called yourselves my Children, but you were a company of disobedient Children; you were a dishonor to me, and now before all I do disown you, you are none of mine, I know you not. Oh! Do you please God now, and obey him now, and honor him now, that he may not blame you at the last, 1 Pet. 3.14. Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless; this doth require and deserve all the diligence you can use.

But that which I would press upon you now is an unblameable walking before Men; that you may be able to look any Man in the face, and being righteous, be as bold as a Lion; and do so in your Families; behave yourselves wisely by walking within your houses with a perfect heart, and in a perfect way. Some when they go abroad put on a Cloak of Morality, and Religion, but when they come home again they put it off; they look like Saints, good Men, sweet tempered Men in other folks, in other Men's houses, but they are Tigers or Devils in their own. Be you everywhere what you should be, in the fear of God all the day, and in all places, good everywhere, best at home. Let Godliness be no Underling, but Commander in chief, ordering and ruling both your words and actions. See that yourselves be not guilty of Lying, Swearing, Cursing, Gaming, Drunkenness, Uncleanness, neither let any filthy Communication proceed out of

your mouths, for it is infectious, tending to the debauching of others, and the corrupting of good manners.

The holy Scriptures, which are the best, and most exact Rule of Faith and Manners, do very much insist upon this, and loudly call for it; 2 Tim. 2.19. Let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity. Whatever he did before while he was an Atheist, an Heathen, though he loved Iniquity, and lived in it, though he drew Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as with Cart-ropes, yet now that he is a Christian, he must turn over another Leaf, if he would prove himself a Man in Christ, he must lead a new Life, and be a new Creature; he must now be divorced from Iniquity, and depart from it, from all Iniquity, from all sorts of Iniquity, and that as far as ever he can, saying of his Iniquity, what Ephraim said of his Idols, What have I to do anymore with them? Hos. 14.8. His very naming the Name of Christ, professing Faith in that Name, and calling himself by it, doth strictly oblige him thereunto. Again, this blessed Scripture (which is as Gold tried seven times in the Fire) doth require you to have the same Mind in you that was in Christ Jesus, and to work out your Salvation with fear and trembling, and also to be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation among whom ye live, and to hold forth the Word of Life; Phil. 2.15, 16. Though your Lines are cast in a debauched place, though you live among a company of profligate Wretches, yet do not you learn their Manners; they will not be the better for you, be not you the worse for them; keep you yourselves pure, though you live in a dirty World that lieth in wickedness, be you as spotless as is possible, imitating Noah, of whom this admirable account is given, that when the wickedness of Man was great upon the Earth, which was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted their way; Gen. 6.5, 12, yet he was a just Man, and perfect in his Generation, and walked with God; Gen. 6.9. Indeed even he

miscarried afterward; for there is not a just Man upon Earth that liveth and sinneth not, but hitherto he pleased God, and set you an excellent Copy, write after him. This, my dear Friends, is the least that all Men have to expect from you who call yourselves Christians, and make a Profession of Godliness, therefore, I beseech you not to fail herein; be sure to do this, be ye blameless.

Secondly; Be you always grave and serious. Keep not only clear of Sin, but also of Vanity, which will abate your esteem, and render you less valuable. Really, I have not seldom thought it more than enough to offend and turn the Stomachs of sober and wise persons, to see the foolish tricks and Antick gestures of some whose Age and Stature did speak them Men. That is evidently true which Elihu said, Great Men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand Judgment; Job 32.9. There may be, and too often is want of Brains in an hoary Head. Paul saith, when he was a Child, he did as a Child, and spake as a Child: Neither was it a thing to be blamed or wondered at; what else was to be expected from him? Though sometimes excellent Wisdom appears in Young ones, as in Timothy, who knew the Scriptures of a Child. And Ambrose saith of Agnes, Corpore juvencula, animo cana fuit; she had a youthful Body, and an aged Mind. Young Samuel had in Grace out-striped old Eli: But, saith Paul, When I came to be a Man, I put away childish things: And it is greatly to be wished, that all would do the same, and not be Children all their days. That when they write Man, they would act like Men, bidding an everlasting farewell to childish Tricks, and childish Discourses, childish Pleasures, childish Actions and Carriages. Yea and if there be any such things as manly follies, have nothing to do with them. How do any think to train and bring up their Young ones to the Wisdom, and Discretion, and holy Prudence of Men, when they themselves are playing the Children before them. Therefore, as I said before, be you grave and serious; let Wisdom breath in all your

discourses; speak much the Language of Heaven; let it be stamped upon all your actions; for one act of folly will detract more from your Reputation, than twenty prudent ones will be able to repair and make up again; let it show itself in all your Converses; be so familiar as to know your place; so let out your Love to Man, as still to keep up your Fear of God; so converse with Friends here, as not to interrupt your Communion with your heavenly Father; be so courteous, as still to be Religious; so sociable, as to keep within those bounds which God hath set you.

I would not be understood as speaking one word, no not a syllable against cheerfulness, a sober and well regulated Mirth; for it is not only allowed by God, which is enough to prove its lawfulness, but also commanded, which renders it a Duty; Eat thy Bread with a merry Heart, rejoice with the Wife of thy Youth, yea, and of thy Age too; and Paul doubles the Precept, Rejoice evermore, and again I say rejoice; and the Psalmist tells us, Praise is comely for the upright; not Complaints, but Songs; not always Prayer, but Praise; the Garment of Praise is the Beautiful Garment which sits most neatly upon a Saints Back, and with this they shall be Invested when taken up to Glory, and admitted into the Joy of their Lord; and this I desire them to consider who please themselves in a dejected, melancholic Temper, and think they never look well, and as becomes them, unless it be when they have a Cloud upon their Countenances, and Tears trickling down their Cheeks, and if ever they would speak properly, it must be in sighs. I wonder who told them so, it must be no other than the Devil, who is an inveterate and implacable Enemy as to their Holiness, so to their Peace and Comfort. Sure I am, that alacrity and cheerfulness is your Friend, and promotes the Health of your Bodies, and furthers the lively, vigorous motions of your Souls in their most noble Employments; it is Health to your Navels, and Marrow to your Bones, and Oil to your Wheels.

And this is also sure, that cheerfulness doth become you; it is most becoming because most proper for you most suitable to that God who is your Father, to that Jesus who is your Head and Husband, to that Covenant upon which you have laid hold, to those Promises in which you are interested, to those Hopes under which you are planted, and to that safe, sweet, blessed state into which you by Grace are brought; and that it doth become you is evident from hence, because it doth belong to you. Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart; and it is fit you should reap that which Heavens Hand hath sown for you. There are no Persons in the World that have such a Right and Title to Joy as Believers have; wicked Men indeed have none at all, no, though they be Rich, yet are commanded to weep and howl for the Miseries that shall come upon them, James 5.1. For a Temporal Heaven, they shall have an Eternal Hell.

And further it is sure, that cheerfulness is one way to commend Religion to others: The World is mistaken about it, and hath taken up a wrong notion of it, which it holds fast, viz. that it is a dull, heavy, mopish, and melancholic thing; that it is morose and ill-natured, an Enemy to Manners and Mirth; but that is a false notion, a grand mistake; it doth not forbid cheerfulness, but directs and orders it, it teacheth Men to be merry and wise; and I do heartily wish all that cheerfulness were quite banished which is inconsistent with the Rules and Principles of our Religion. The World would be far better without it; what need is there of that Laughter which Solomon called Madness, or what good comes of it; away with all that Jestings which the Scripture calls vain. It is a sad thing for Men to live Jestings, and after that go to Hell in Earnest; you will find it best to be Merry and Religious. *Res severa est verum gaudium*; true joy is a severe, grave, and serious thing, and let that measure your days; let there be lightsomeness, but nothing of lightness; solidity, but no froth; let



your Families be witnesses of your Integrity, and see nothing in your Conversation that is below understanding Men, nothing unworthy of gracious Christians. But this is not enough.

Thirdly; Let your Carriages be holy. Our Savior said to his Hearers, what do ye more than others? Mat. 5.47. You that have received more than others must do more than others; you that have been made partakers of Grace must out do, and out go, and out-shine those that have no more than Nature; it is not enough for you that you do nothing contrary to the Divine Precepts, that you do not point-blank run cross to the Rule of the Gospel. Negative Religion will never commend you to God, nor carry you to Heaven; you must conform to those Precepts, and walk up to that Rule, so shall you have Peace, and find Mercy. I have hoped for thy Salvation, and done thy Commandments; not legally, but Evangelically, Psal. 119.166. Yea, he that hath the Commandments of God in his Heart may have Salvation in his Eye. He that leads a Life of obedience may live a Life of Hope; and so godliness richly pays for the pains it calls for; therefore I say unto you walk in print, so walk as to set Copies for others to write after, so that you may say to them, Walk so as you have us for an Example.

You do very well know how ready young ones are to produce you for their warrant, and they think your Example is sufficient authority, and should signify as much as an <H&G> did formerly in the Schools, which stopped the Mouth of Contradiction, no Argument to the contrary was to be admitted; so here, young ones think the day is their own when they can say, I heard my Father or my Master speak such a word, or I saw him do such a thing; and from thence they strongly conclude, that without all peradventure they may speak and do the same; where as poor Creatures they are greatly mistaken, that is a very sorry Plea, a weak, pitiful Argument that cannot justify

them, nor will it satisfy God; if the thing done be amiss, your doing it will not bear them out when the matter comes to be tried before the Judgment-Seat of Christ; nay, your Example alone is so far from being sufficient to justify them, that your command will not do it. I do indeed know it hath been said, If Superiors command what is unlawful, Inferiors are bound to obey them; and in such a case, Though the Superiors shall be damned for their command, yet the Inferiors shall be saved for their Obedience; but it is a Cursed Opinion; we are bound to obey God rather than all the Men in the World; their Examples are not for us to follow, nor doth their commands oblige us to active Obedience, when they run cross to the Law of God: and the Wrath of God hath broken out, and will still break out against Persons and People for such their Obedience, Hos. 5.11, 12. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the Commandment, therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a Moth, and to the House of Judah as Rottenness.

Wherefore I advise and beseech you that ye would be holy, that so ye may be exemplary; be you sure to keep the way of God, that they may safely tread in your steps; do you follow Christ that ye may with boldness call upon them to be followers of you. I cannot but again mention that resolution of David, and desire you to remember it, and make it your fixed resolve too; Psal. 101.2. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way, I will walk within my House with a perfect Heart; do you the same? Behave yourselves graciously, that is, behaving yourselves wisely, walk in the Scripture-way, for that is the perfect way; then you may humbly invite God to come unto you, and comfortably hope that he will. Do this, I say, in your House, in your Families, and before your Domestics, where, and with whom, you do most frequently and intimately converse; and in order to the more firm fastening of this Resolution, and your better putting it in practice, I advise you often to call to mind that excellent Question

propounded by the Apostle Peter in his second Epistle, Chap. 3, ver. 11. Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, all what things? All those things that he had spoken of in the former part of that Chapter, all these things that are within your sight; your Families shall be dissolved, your nearest and dearest Relations, Civil, Conjugal, Natural, shall be dissolved; the Union between your Souls and Bodies shall be dissolved, those two old dear Friends must part, the whole Frame and Fabric of Nature must be dissolved, The Heavens, i.e. these visible Heavens, shall pass away with a great noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat, for the Lord Jesus will be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire; the Earth also and the works therein shall be burnt up; what Works? God's Works, and Men's Works; well, what then? One Question I would ask you, and have you to ask yourselves, that is this, What are you? Are you fire proof? Are you Gold? Can you endure the Burning? Can you dwell with devouring Fire, and not be devoured by it? Another Question is, What should you be? Take it in the same Apostles words, What manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Not of the ordinary make and common size of Professors, See that you be Saints of the first rate; let your godliness be of the highest pitch, and most lovely complexion. See that you be excellent and eminent for your Holiness, that every step of your way be no other than a walking with God, that everyone of your actions be right and regular, and that your whole Conversation, all the windings and turnings of your Lives be plain and evident demonstrations of your holiness and godliness.

Fourthly; Be humble and meek in your Departments. As you are commanded to put on Christ, that lie may be visible in your Tempers and Lives, and others may love Christum habitantem in vobis, Christ dwelling in you; so you are commanded to be clothed with Humility. This should be the upper Garment, and through this your Graces,

and Gifts, all your Excellencies and Accomplishments will shine with the greater and more taking Beauty.

I must and do most readily grant there is a distance between the Rulers and the Ruled, between Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Mistresses and Maids; Nature itself teacheth it, and God himself hath ordered it; and Superiors should know their places, and be known in them; it is fit, it becomes them, yea, it is their duty, and they ought not to part with any of that honor, and power, and authority, with which God hath invested them, so to do would be sin. And on the other side, Inferiors are to understand themselves, and to know their places, and to keep their distance. There is an honor owing from Children to Parents, and they ought most cheerfully to pay it. There is a fear, a reverence, an awe due from Servants to their Masters and Mistresses, and they are bound with all readiness to give it, they sin if they do it not; they must not think to be (as the Proverb hath it) hail Fellows well met; the Sacred Scripture knoweth no such thing, the Great and Holy God doth not allow it; see how his Will in this matter is revealed in his Word, Eph. 6.1, 2. Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right; honor thy Father and Mother that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth; ver. 5. Servants, be obedient to them that are your Masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. The like you may read in Col. 3.20, 21, 22. And again, 1 Tim. 6.1. Let as many Servants as are under the yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all honor, that the Name of God, and his Doctrine be not blasphemed. God is not the God of Confusion, but of Order, and it is his Will that Order should be maintained and kept up in Churches, and Nations, and Families.

Yet notwithstanding all this, it is the duty and very becoming of Superiors as to be low in their own Eyes, so to be humble in their

Behavior toward those below them, and to condescend to those who are of low degree. Christ Jesus was Master, though he took upon him the form of a Servant, he was Lord of all, yea, the Lord of Glory, yet he was meek and lowly; and it was his Will that all his Disciples should of him learn to be so, Mat. 11.29. The highest Heaven is not so much above the Earth as the great and glorious God is above Angels and Men; there is an infinite distance between him and us, yet how low doth he stoop, how wonderfully doth he condescend to his poor Creatures, to Worms, to Dust and Ashes, to whom he looks, with whom he dwells, whom he gives leave to lay hold upon his strength, to wrestle with him, to come with boldness to his throne of Grace, to whom he saith, Ask me of things to come concerning my Sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me! Isa. 45.11. Mind these things, and be astonished that so great a Majesty should so greatly bow to such pitiful shreds of Being; Psal. 8.4. What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him? Now certainly since the great God, and our Savior, do thus stoop and humble themselves, we cannot but conclude, that Pride becomes nobody, but it is the shame and disgrace of all that are guilty of it; and generally those Persons are highest in Pride who are lowest in Worth; Pride and Frowardness turn Men and Women into Monsters, yea, into a kind of ugly Devils, for as such they appear in the Eyes of those that have to do with them, yea, let their other accomplishments be never so great, yet this one thing spoils all. Such a Man is an Understanding Man, a Learned Man, a Wise Man, an Active Man, a very Useful Man; this is a high Encomium, but he is a Self-conceited Man, a Proud, Lofty Man, it is a great blot in his Escutcheon, Men do not like him, and God will resist him; whereas Humility is an Ornament wheresoever it is found, but it sets them off most who are highest. God delights to see such a Man, he will dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, Isa. 57.15. And that is an evident sign he likes and loves them well, and as he will dwell

with him, so will be good and liberal to them, he will revive his spirit, and give him grace, Jam. 4.6. He hath a special favor for them, he will smile lovingly upon them, he will give forth plentifully of his Spirit unto them, they shall have fresh influences, and blessed assistances, grace for grace. Thus a humble Spirit renders you pleasing to God, in and through Jesus Christ, and a kind, affable, courteous behavior will commend you to Men, to all those with whom you Converse.

But while I am commending humility to Family Governors, I would not have them to do anything unworthy of that place in which God hath set them. Stoop, but not basely, not below your place, show yourselves humble and kind, but do not make yourselves mean, and cheap. Remember you are Parents, and Master and Mistress, and carry as such, and let not Inferiors forget themselves, nor turn kindness into wantonness and neglect; there are due bounds and limits unto which they may go, and beyond which they cannot pass without being Transgressors. It is not fit that Servants should be all tongue in the presence of their Master, or their Mistress, or boldly mingle themselves with their Discourses; yet they may be permitted to speak before them, so that they open their mouths with wisdom, in a due season, and in a right manner. It is not fit that Servants should usurp Authority, or take into their own hands the reins of Government, as if they had a right to dictate and give order; no, no, their business is to do the work, and not to cut it out; yet they may sometimes, and in some cases modestly show their Opinion. Servants are to be obedient to their Masters, pleasing them well in all things, not answering again; not quarreling and murmuring against their Orders or Corrections, not thwarting and contradicting them, and thereby provoking their anger and indignation against them; yet when they are spoken to, they must not be sullenly silent, but give respective answers; yet when they have received wrong, and are

unjustly charged, they may seasonably with due submission, and soft words (which turn away wrath) assert their own innocence, and clear themselves of that blame which was laid upon them. An instance hereof we have in David, 1 Sam. 24.8, 9, 10, 11. When Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself; and David said to Saul, wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee today into my hand in the Cave, and some bid me kill thee, but mine eye spared thee: and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my Lord, for he is the Lord's Anointed. Moreover, my Father, see, yea see the skirt of thy Robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy Robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see, that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; thus he did, and so Servants may humbly clear and vindicate themselves when innocent. And Saul himself, as bad as he was, did hearken to him, and owned his integrity; saying, thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

Before I pass on and leave this particular, I shall propound to your consideration the practice of Job, who was a Mirror of Patience, and a Non-such for Piety. He tells us, it was far from him to despise the cause of his Man-Servant, or his Maid Servant, when they contended with him. If I had done so, saith he, what shall I do when God riseth up, and what shall I answer when he visiteth? Job 31.13, 14. We must needs speak something to that word contended; when they contended with me. May Servants contend with their Masters and Mistresses? They do often, too too often contend among themselves, one with another, more shame for them; but would Job allow them to contend with himself? If he did, indeed we may admire his Patience, but have no reason to commend his Prudence. What therefore are we to understand by this their contending? Let Holy

and Reverend Mr. Caryl answer the question, which he doth, in these Particulars.

First, We are not to understand this, of a bold and saucy contending, doubtless Job was a Wiser Man than to endure such unmannerly Servants in his House; such saucy carriage deserves and calls for sour returns; nor

Secondly, Are we to understand hereby contention in a way of gainsaying, thwarting him in his Orders, and contradicting his Commands; a Master who knows his place, will not bear with that, he is not to have them for his Controllers, nor

Thirdly, are we to understand it of any unreasonable murmuring and dislike upon every trivial and frivolous occasion; these things, saith he, are not to be permitted in any well-governed Family, such as Job was. If Servants will thus contend with their Masters, they have, saith he, not only reason to despise and dislike them, but unless they amend, to rid their hands of them, and put them out of their Houses. Therefore we have cause to conclude Job's meaning was this.

Fourthly, When any Servant had matter of complaint as to any Household grievance, he gave them free liberty to acquaint him with it; they needed not be afraid to present their case to him, whom they should find to be their Patron, as well as their Master, and as ready to do them right, as to expect service from them, as the same Author saith. Sometimes Servants complain that their Reward or Wages is too little, sometimes that their Work is too much, and lieth too hard or heavy upon them. When Job's Servants contended with him about those, or any such matters, he did not bid them hold their tongue, or get them gone, much less did he say as Pharaoh did, there shall be more work laid upon you, that you may labor therein, but he heard them patiently, and gave them redress, if their Complaints were just,



which many Masters would not do; or else he convinced them by his Wisdom, and the weight of his Arguments, that their Complaints were causeless, and unreasonable, which most Masters could not do. He was always willing and ready to rectify whatever was amiss, and to remove everything that was really a grievance; go ye and do likewise.

It is past dispute, that Masters and Mistresses have a place above their Servants; God himself hath by the all-disposing hand of his wise Providence, set them upon the upper ground, and they have a power over their Servants, so long as they continue such; but yet they are not to abuse them, nor trample them under their feet; no, no, you ought to be humble, meek, and lowly, though never so great, so high, and rich. The Sun is a glorious Creature, and much above the Earth, yet how comfortable is it to the things therein, how kind and benign its Beams and Influences? Be you so in your Places, not only righteous to them, but courteous, not Laban's, not Nabal's. To this end, frequently remember and consider, that as you are Persons in Authority, so you are under Authority, you yourselves have a Master too; you are above your Servants, but there is a God in Heaven who is infinitely more above you, and hath Persons, Times, and Things, in his own hand, and at his own dispose, and doth make frequent turns and changes in the World, and it is his delight to abase the Proud. If any of you will pride it in the place of Masters, and Mistresses, God can easily, and he quickly may bring you down into the place, rank and condition of poor Servants, and such an alteration will be very uneasy to you, unless God brings your Spirits down to your Condition, it will be very uneasy; a strait Shoe drawn upon a big foot, pincheth it, and puts it to pain.

Fifthly, Be loving and Kind in all your Carriages. Love like Varnish puts a beauty and gloss upon all things, and like Sugar or Honey a

sweetness into them, it is a most glorious representation of God to us, the Scripture saith, he is Love. It was an excellent Chariot which King Solomon made for himself, Cant. 3.9, 10, of the Wood of Lebanon, there was sweetness, the Pillars thereof were Silver, and the bottom was Gold, and the covering of it of purple, there was Richness, and Princely State, but what follows sets off and commends all the rest; the midst of it was paved with Love for the Daughters of Jerusalem. Yes, had there been no love there, one might as well have rode in a Cart, as in Solomon's Chariot. Love goeth with the Holy Soul to Heaven, and there it is perfected, and there it eternally abides, and is the Heaven of Heaven, it is the brightness of its glory, and the sweetness of all its delights. Faith and Hope are two excellent Graces, and of singular use here, but they will both cease; Faith being swallowed up of Vision, and Hope most gladly resigning its place to Fruition, but Love remains. Heaven would not be Heaven without Love; call that place Hell where Love is not, that House Hell where Love dwells not.

You that are Husbands, and Wives be loving and kind to one another, in your looks and in your lips let there be the law of kindness ▪ that will strengthen your interest in your Family, and power over it, as well as sweeten your own life, and Relations; whereas your quarrels and contentions do and will render you mean, cheap and contemptible in the eyes of your Inferiors. Some may think it great to ride Master, and to have their will, but they lose much more in their honor than that comes to. Therefore if at any time there happen a disagreement between you, keep it close and private between yourselves, not suffering it to take air; if there be a spark of discontent kindled, put it out with all speed, and let it not break forth into a flame.

Be also kind and loving to your Servants, and to your Children; when you give out your Orders to them, do not do it in an imperious way; some think it becomes them to speak altogether in thunder, but let them remember, that it pleased the great God to speak to his Servant Elijah in a still voice. To command with Love, is the most likely way to be obeyed with delight, and cheerfulness.

When you Teach and Instruct them, do it with gentleness; the moderate Rain doth more sweetly soak into the Earth, and refresh the Fruit of it, than Thunder-Showers, which falling with violence, lay the Corn, and the Grass, and damnify both; it is better to instill into them knowledge and good Principles, than to knock and beat them in. Love doth most sweetly unlock and open the ear, and makes a free and easy passage for Instructions, and Councils to enter in, and it doth mollify and soften the heart, so that it is rendered more ready to receive impressions, more faithful and careful to retain them.

When you do reprove them, as reprove them you must when they do deserve it, silence in such a case is sinful. He that suffers Sin to rest upon his Child or Servant, brings guilt upon himself, and becomes a partaker with him in his evil deeds. He that doth not reprove for Sin, encourageth in it, and for not reprovng, shall be reprovd. But whensoever you do reprove, let it be done in Love. Adam had disobeyed God in eating the forbidden Fruit, God did not wink at it, resolved to punish him for it, and did, yet he came to him in the cool of the day. Always dip the Nail in Oil, for that is the way to make it drive best, and pierce deepest, otherwise the Board may split, or the Nail bow and break, through a stubborn resistance.

When you are angry with them, moderate your passion, and mingle it, do not stir up all your wrath, but in the midst thereof remember

Mercy; even then let them see that you love them, and that though their sinful Practices be odious to you, yet their Persons are dear, and all the fruit you aim at, is the taking away their Sin, and that you design your hottest anger for nothing else but a refining fire, to separate their dross from them, that afterwards they may come out like Gold.

When you chide them, be sure it is not without a cause, nor more than it doth deserve. He is no Wise Man, that for the roasting of an Egg, makes a fire big enough to roast an Ox, all that cost might have been saved, and the thing better done. In such a case a holy warmth is necessary, and highly desirable; but let not your tongue be set on fire with the fire of Hell, no, no, let Grace be poured into your lips, and out of them too; mix your severest Chidings with convincing Discourses, gracious Counsels, and persuasive Arguments; and while you would drive them from Sin, at the same time draw them to Virtue, and Godliness.

When you Correct them, do it in Wisdom; if Rods will do, make no use of Scorpions; yea, and let Love lay on the Rod, remembering God, who contends in measure; let them see clearly that your chastening of them is not for your pleasure, but their own profit, that they might be reduced from the error of their way, and made partakers of God's holiness, and when you Correct, pray for them. It is God's Ordinance, therefore beg a blessing of him upon his own Ordinance, that through him it may prosper, to the destruction of the corrupt Flesh, and so the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5.5.

This is the ready way to gain them a most proper course, to render all the means you use effectual upon them, then will they look upon your very smiting's as a kindness, and upon your reproofs as an

excellent Oil, that will not break their heads. This is the way to make your Counsels theirs, and to make them yet more your own, by gaining their hearts. As kindness makes subjection most easy to the inferior, and most pleasant; the Yoak will not gaul if it be lined with Velvet; so it commands with the greatest power, it draws suaviter, & fortiter, sweetly, and strongly, so that the Soul runs; it allures and constrains too: and at the same time it makes Government pleasant to the Superior, plucking Thorns out of the Crown, and instead of them, sticking it with Roses. Whereas an imperious froward Lord or Master doth not only make his Family uneasy, but himself too; as their Yoak is heavy, so his Seat will be hard, and while he is all for Whip and Spur, it will make both his arm and his heart ache to hold the Bridle. Remember that God's way is to draw with the Cords of a Man, i.e., with rational Arguments for the convincing of the Judgment, and with loving kindness, in order to a moving upon, and winning of the affections; be ye followers of him as dear Children. The more there is of love in your hearts and lives, the more there is of God, the more do you express and glorify him; and here let me add that which followeth hereupon, or rather most sweetly accompanies it.

Sixthly, Be not severe and rigid in your dealings with them, but tender and compassionate. It is said of the Egyptians, that they made the Children of Israel serve with rigor, and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in Mortar, and in Brick, and in all manner of service in the Field, all their Service wherein they made them serve was with rigor; Tyranny, Violence, Fierceness, *citra ullam clementiam aut misericordiam*, without any clemency, or mercy, *Exod. 13.14*, therefore Egypt is called an Iron Furnace, *Deut. 4.20*, but Israelites were forbidden to rule over one another after this manner; If thy Brother be waxen poor, and sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a Bonds Servant, *Levite. 25.39*. Thou

shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God, ver. 43, over your Brethren the Children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor v. 46, ye shall not rack him with labor, nor with blows, nor with threatening's; ye Masters forbear threatening's, Ephesians 6.9, not altogether, sometimes they may be necessary, but do not use them always, nor often. Well then, God would have you not rigorous and oppressive, but tender; be so then, as to instance in some particulars.

In their Sickness, let them have what you can afford, and their case doth require; give them convenient Lodging, due Attendance, with all that is necessary both for Food, and Physic, that so they may see their Lives are valued by you, and precious to you, and that it is your will they should not want anything that is fit for them. How did the good Centurion regard his sick Servant? Luke 7.2, 3. His Servant who was dear unto him was sick, and when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the Elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his Servant. By taking care of them under their Distempers, you will gain their hearts yet more, and engage them to take the greater care of your business when their health shall be restored them.

In their Work do not over-task them, do not call them to that which you know they have not skill to do, nor lay upon them such heavy burdens as are above their strength to bear, though such Task-Masters have been found among Egyptians, let there be none such among professed Christians. It is more becoming the Servants of Pharaoh, who is called a Dragon-Leviathan, than the followers of Jesus who is the Lamb of God, a Lyon indeed for strength in his defending of them, but a Lamb for meekness in his dealings with them; when he invites Men and Women to take his Yoak upon them, he tells them it is easy, and his burden is light; and whether it be so

or no, ask one of his Servants who did draw in it, and was able to speak from his own experience, and he hath past his word for it, and left it upon Record, that his Commands are not grievous.

And in their failings be ye merciful to them; if you are only concerned, bear as much as is fit, but if God be concerned too, make them know your deep resentment; but withal, do what you can to restore them with a Spirit of meekness, trample not upon them when down, but lend them your hand toward the raising them up again to Repentance. And by it, I would not have you (as I said before) wink at Sin, either in your Children, or in your Servants; for who knows how great a matter a little fire kindles? How many Unclean Spirits may follow one that was admitted and found entertainment before? Besides, to bear with Sin in them, is the way to provoke the anger of God against yourselves, because you do not punish Sin in them, God will punish that neglect in you. Yet even in that case, you ought to act with prudence, and Christian moderation, and let the offending Parties find, that while your wrath burns against their sin, your bowels yearn over them. As when God threatened Adam and Eve for their Disobedience, yet he threw out to them a plank after the Shipwreck, and before he turned them out of Paradise, he opened to them a door of hope in that early and most gracious Promise, the Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpents head.

And for the promoting of this tenderness in you, consider your own obnoxiousness to God, they have their miscarriages, and you are not without, but do offend in many things; you did so when you were young as they are, and to this day you are not faultless, but if the Lord should be strict to mark iniquities, you would never be able to abide it, and therefore have need to go down upon your knees every day, and humbly sue out your pardon; and it is a plain case, such as stand in need of a Pardon themselves should be very free to give it

out to others: and upon those terms only it is to be expected, our Savior having told us, that if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our Heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses. 6. Mat. 15. That King was justly severe with his cruel Servant, who owed him Ten thousand Talents, and upon his entreaty had that vast debt forgiven him; but meeting with his fellow Servant who owed him no more than Five hundred Pence, laid hold on him, took him by the Throat and cast him into Prison; whereupon his Lord was wrath and delivered him to the Tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So, saith Christ shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses. Matthew 18 23. So that your Lives, your Pardon, your Salvation depend upon this: if you will show no mercy, you are not like to find any, that measure which you meet to others shall be meted out to you again; neither is this forgiveness to be past to a Brother only, but to an Enemy, to a Servant, upon profession of Repentance, and the promise of amendment. How Pathetically did the Apostle Paul plead with Philemon for his forgiving of Onesimus, and receiving him again into his favor and Family, who had before been an unfaithful Servant, but was at that time a Penitent and Convert.

Eighthly and Lastly, In the measuring out of your love and kindness, make no difference but where the merit and desert of Persons did make one first; This is the way to encourage virtue, without discouraging anyone. Indeed it is too common and ordinary a fault, and too frequently visible in Families for Parents to be partial, unequal, yea and unjust in the distribution of their favors, when bystanders are not able to give any; no not the least shadow nor color of Reason for it. One Child, and possibly that too none of the best shall be the Darling, and have all the countenance and respect, and all the attendance, and abundance of good things given it, when the others are slighted and neglected as if they were not their own, or not



worthy to be owned; though they have cost the Mothers much sickness in breeding them, and as much pain in bringing them forth; and as much care and trouble in their rearing of them up, yet after all they are looked upon as the refuse and off-scouring of the Family; and whereas they have a right to the privileges of Children, they are debased to the condition of Servants, if not of Slaves. This I myself have been a mournful spectator of, feeling in me the workings of those passions of grief and displeasure which such a matter might well raise; and as for those Parents which are herein guilty, I desire them seriously to consider these few things which I shall but briefly touch upon.

First, What a great discouragement this is to those poor neglected Children. Hereby you damp their Spirits, and take off their edge; possibly they are dull and heavy already, and you take a course to make them more so; if they be naturally quick and lively, they are the more apprehensive and sensible of your unkindness, and that causeth the greater dejection.

Secondly, You create in them a grudge against him who is your fondling. And lay the foundation of a present and future, if not a perpetual breach, and he or she who is the object of your unequal love, may for that very reason be the sole object of their envy and rage. I suppose you know how Joseph 's dreams did incense his Brethren against him, and how do you know but your dreaming or rather doting folly, may have as direful an effect of one kind or another?

Thirdly, You do provoke those Children to be less respective and dutiful to you. Truly Parents, if they be wise, will so carry as to get their Children's love; for as they depend upon you now, so you may when they are grown up stand in need of them; though now they are

but little ones, yet remember they may come to be Men and Women, and be great supports and comforts to you when you can do little for yourselves, and it is not your bringing of them forth, not their mere having a being from you that will endear you to them; in case there be afterward an apparent defect in your love, you will find their memories are tenacious. I heartily wish, this may never be your case, but there is too much reason to fear it, and if it should come to pass, you will see cause to repent, but alas! Then it will be too late, the matter is past cure.

Fourthly, This partial and unequal affection of Parents may provoke against them the Divine displeasure. Yea, and make them to feel the smarting effects thereof. God may write his anger in such plain and legible Characters that they may run and read their sin in the punishment. As in another case, when God saw that Jacob loved Rachel, but not Leah, or Rachel more than Leah, he opened the Womb of Leah, and gave her Power to Conceive and bring forth, but shut up Rachel's Womb and struck her with Barrenness, 29 Genesis 31, and I will appeal to you, have not some of you known Parents herein chargeable; the Father or Mother have set their Hearts too much upon one Child, and their Affections have run with a strong and violent stream in that Channel; and it hath issued in lamentation and woe, one of these two things have followed thereupon. Either,

First, God hath taken away that Child from them. They hugged it to death, as the Ape doth her young ones. Jonah was exceeding glad because of the gourd that shadowed his head, and in some measure helped and relieved him against the vehement scorching heat of the Sun; here joyced with great joy, he was overjoyed, and what followed? God prepared a Worm, when the Morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. 4. Jonah 6, 7. He joyced

too much, and his enjoyment was short; over-loving a Child is over laying it. It is as killing it with kindness. Or

Secondly, If that Child hath been continued to them it hath been in wrath. They have the life of it, but they want the comfort of it; for it hath proved naught and vicious, and so been a Thorn in their side, a Heart-break to them. They had better while it was Young have followed it to the Grave, than see it now notoriously wicked, an Enemy to God and all goodness, disobedient to them, and galloping to Hell with full speed, as if it thought it could not get thither soon enough.

Therefore upon all these accounts the advice which I give unto Parents is this; observe the spirits and carriages of your Children, and also of your Servants, which of them do most fear God, and respect you; which of them are most tractable and diligent, and let them have most love and respect who do deserve it best; bestow your greatest cost upon that Soil which makes the best returns, by this means they will have no just cause of quarreling you. By this you will prevent envy, discontent and breaches among them; and also promote Piety and Goodness in your Families, by stirring up in them all an excellent, sweet and Friendly Emulation. So that there shall be a striving together without wrath and bitterness, how they may excel in Godliness and Virtue, and in all those things which you require of them, and which will render them acceptable and pleasant unto you; this will sweeten and commend obedience to them, it will increase and add to their endeavors, it will be as a Golden Spur to quicken their pace in the way that they should go.

Now for a Coronis or conclusion of this my Discourse, upon this great, and (specially at this day) necessary Subject of Family Duties, I shall add some Miscellany Counsels, and make a kind of Medley,

inviting whoever will to come and take, and apply those of them to themselves, which they shall judge most proper and pertinent to their case; and the God of Heaven bless them to them.

First, Look diligently, lest any fail or fall short of the grace of God, 12 Hebrews 15. You see there it is the Apostle 's Advice, it will be your wisdom to take and follow it; see that the Spirit of Christ dwell in you, else you are none of his; and that you have been made partakers of his renewing sanctifying Influences: without the Spirit of God you will never be fit for the Work of God: Without Christ's breathing upon his Apostles, and their receiving from him the Holy Ghost, they could never have done the work of an Apostle; so without Christ's breathing upon you, and your receiving his Spirit, you will never rightly perform the work of a Christian.; where there is not the Spirit of Grace, there is not the Spirit of Supplication.

Nor will a person void of the Spirit and Grace be welcome to God, nor his Service pleasing. Such an one indeed may perform the External Duties of Religion, and set up the Worship of God in his Family, and it is no more than what he owes to God, and to himself, and to his House, yet that which he doth will not be accepted; if the man be bad, what he doth cannot be good, but is quite spoiled by his doing it: The Sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: Though the Sacrifice for the matter of it be rich and costly, yet God's soul loathes and abhors, it because a wicked man brings it; The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering, 4 Gen. 4, first to the person, and then to the thing.

Besides, unless you have the Spirit and Grace, you will not be constant in Duty, a small matter shall take you off, and stop you in your course; the question is, Will the hypocrite pray always, will he always call upon God? The Answer is easy and ready; no, he will not,

and the Reason is plain, because there is not a spring to feed the stream, not an inward principle to keep on the motion: God complained of old, That the people drew nigh unto him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him: Mark, though there were appearances before God, yet their hearts and God did never meet together in the Duty, and therefore the day will most certainly come when there will be a parting between such people and their duties, they never cordially and thoroughly agreed with God himself, never came to a full closure with his terms, never loved him for his holiness, nor rejoiced at the remembrance of it, and therefore for something or other they will fall out with his Works and Ways.

Consider my dearly beloved, and again consider what the Scripture saith. It is a good thing that the Heart be established with Grace, Heb. 13.9, both with the Doctrine of Grace, and with an internal Principle of Grace, for the one will not do without the other, nothing short of Grace can strengthen, stablish and settle the Heart, till Grace be infused into the Soul, and becomes a new nature in it, till it comes to be commander in chief, the Heart of man will be fluttering and unstable, off and on playing fast and loose with God, it will look toward the holy Temple, and take some steps in the Way of God, and that with seeming life and vigor, as much zeal for the Lord of Hosts as Jehu pretended to have, but being only a preternatural heat, it cools again, and the man jades and tires.

But when once Grace comes in truth and with Power it fixeth the Soul, and as when the Rulers of the People and Elders of Israel commanded the Apostles not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. Peter and John answered them thus, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard, Acts 4.20, so when there is an holy frame wrought in any, they cannot but wait upon God, converse and walk with God, they cannot but Read and Hear and Pray: they

cannot live a spiritual life without these spiritual breathings more than another life without natural breathing, an holy fear will powerfully drive them to their duty, a filial love will sweetly draw them to it, and Faith will mightily encourage them in it, while they do really and firmly believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; they cannot but be a seeking People, while they do believe that let them be steadfast and immovable, and never so much abounding in the Work of the Lord, their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, they cannot but be an industrious and diligent People: and while they do believe that in the keeping of God's Commandments there is great reward, besides all that which shall be hereafter, they will delight themselves greatly in them, and it will be their meat and drink to do them, and yet more when besides this Faith in God, they themselves have tasted that God is gracious, and had experience of that advantage which comes in by religious duties. I Love the Lord, said David, because he hath heard my Voice. He hath experience of God's goodness and a love to him, because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live, Psal. 116.1, 2. His mercy to me hath drawn out my love to him, and my love shall influence my obedience. I love him, and I will cleave to him and follow after him.

Secondly, While you are young covet after those gifts which may in some good measure accomplish you for the filling up of your duties and places, and the performance of every duty. It is an excellent thing for Christians to be well furnished, and youth is a golden season for that purpose, as for those, who are not studious while they are in the morning of their age, there is too much ground of fear, that they will continue Fools to their latter end.

It is indeed too apparent, that some, yea, too many who have good natural parts, and attained to some Knowledge and Learning, are

thereupon wretchedly self-conceited, and puffed up, knowing neither themselves, nor anybody else; their pride testifieth against them to their very faces, and this is their folly, and their shame; they have no reason to swell, for they are empty, and the opinion they have taken up of themselves, is far above their abilities; when a Wise Man comes to fathom them, he finds they are very shallow, and their real intrinsic worth doth fall extremely below that price, which they set upon themselves.

On the other side, there are many that pretend to nothing, and indeed there is nothing which they may pretend to, being altogether ignorant, weak, and poor, their upper room is wholly destitute and unfurnished, they are not able to discourse of God, and the things of God; they cannot pray, but want both matter and words, whereas they should be rich, and increased in goods, they are blind and wretched, and poor, and miserable; and whereas they should be thoroughly furnished for every good work, they are furnished for none at all: And from whence doth this proceed, but from their own gross neglect? They have not meditated as they should, nor read the Scriptures, nor heard Sermons as they should; they did not labor to stock and store themselves while they are young, and so they come to be poor and beggarly when they are old; they squandered away their Golden Age, and now they are come to their Silver hairs, their heads and hearts are little worth.

I do therefore now direct my Discourse to you young ones of both Sexes, and would have you better to befriend yourselves, and as you do now learn your Trades, and your Books, and to manage Household business, and labor to get betimes a good insight into your several Callings, and so to understand them, as that you may be able afterward to set them up, and carry them on with Credit, and to advantage; go away and do the like as to Religion, and the things of

God. Begin betimes to mind those things which do most deserve your minding, now acquaint yourselves with God, look into your own hearts, and States, and study them well, get the knowledge of your Sins and Wants, when you read or hear, or are in company with good Men, see that it turn to account, and you get something by it, make something your own; be continually laying up, though it be but by little at a time, yet it may come to something. The Evangelical Prophet hath this expression, Isa. 42.23. Who among you will give ear to this, who will hearken and hear for the time to come? Truly that is excellent Husbandry, very good for Men to be beforehand; will you study this really? It is your best way, it is your interest. I would advise you to nothing, but what doth one way or another make for your own interest; this doth so; to read for the time to come, and to hear for the time to come; and to this end consider what you do in other cases: you will labor to get Money and Land for the time to come; and some of you to stock yourselves with Clothes and Linnen for the time to come: and give me if you can, a Reason why you should not be as desirous to get Knowledge, and Gifts, and Grace for the time to come? Are not these things as good as the other? Are they not better? O! Do it then, I beseech you do it: be not Wise for your Bodies, and Fools for your Souls; Wise for time, and Fools for Eternity. See that you do things now in your single capacity, while you have the greatest leisure, and briskness of Parts; that so when you come to be Married, and have Families to order and govern, you may be Workmen that need not be ashamed, and able to do all your Work and Duty: And have a treasury out of which you may bring forth good things new and old, for the enriching of others; whom it should be your desire, and will be your comfort to see thriving under you. A Christian rich in gifts and grace, is most like to do good.

Thirdly, Study well how things stand with yourselves and with them that are yours. Though I might also add with the Nation and Church



of God, which are the Body of which you are Members, the Ship, in which you have so great a venture; and since you have a concernment in them, you ought to be daily and earnest supplicants for them. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, if I do not remember thee, let my Tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief Joy. 137. Psalm 5, 6. But that which I advise you at present is a care within doors; see how matters stand with your Heart and with your House. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy stocks, and look well to thy herds. 27. Proverbs 23. And if such diligence should be used, such knowledge to be got of Flocks, and Herds, then Men should study and labor to understand their own state, and the state of their yoke fellows, and Children, and Servants, be strict observers of them, and frequent in your inquiries concerning them, and all that are under your charge, and see how matters have been with you, and them, and how they are, what are the providences of the day, and the dispensations of God toward you, and them.

This will supply you with matter of Prayer, yea, probably with variety of matter, and he that hath good store of matter, is most like to find good store of words to express it. Though a full Vessel may for a time want vent, yet when a little is given, it runs apace at the tap. This you may gather from those passages of Elihu, Job 23.18, 19.20. I am full of matter, the Spirit within me constraineth me; behold my Belly is as Wine which hath not vent, it is ready to burst like new Bottles; and what now? There was no need of any squeezing him to get a drop out; no need of pouring some water in, in order to the pumping more out; no, he was resolved to ease himself. I will speak that I may be refreshed, I will open my Lips, and answer. The informing and rectifying of others, the correcting of their errors and mistakes, was an ease, delight and refreshing to Elihu himself.

Yea, and as this is the way to supply you with matter for Prayer, so to furnish you with suitable affections also; without which, Praying is no better than trifling, a losing of time, and a mocking of God. When your hearts are dead and dull, this considering of things is the way to excite and quicken them in the Duty, Psal. 39.4. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned, then spake I with my Tongue. I shall give you two or three instances; when you consider your own personal sins, or those which have been committed by any of your Family, it will help you in Confession, which is a special part of Prayer, and a giving Glory to God; and very much conduce to the humbling, softening and melting of your Hearts, and then you will appear before the Throne of Grace as becomes you, and cannot carry with you a more acceptable and welcome present. Psal. 51.17. The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. When you ponder upon your own and your Families wants, necessities, burdens and afflictions, it will draw forth desires and longings; hungering's and thirsting's, and God fills the hungry with good things, it will raise a Holy fervor and heat, and as in Manoah's, so in the flame of thy Sacrifices the Father of Mercies, the Angel of the Covenant may do wonderfully. And when you are considering of the mercy and goodness to you, and commended by such and such circumstances, it may tune both Heart and Tongue to a Song of praise; and not only afford you just matter of thankfulness, but also raise up your Souls to a God-blessing, God-admiring, and God-exalting frame, and while you are much in Offering praise; you may comfortably hope, and expect that God will more and more show you his Salvation, and compass you about with his favor as a Shield, and so sweeten your lives to you with farther instances of his care, and evidences of his Love, as shall further and raise your after comfort and joy.

Many are spoiled, ruined, and forever lost through want of consideration. They do not repent because they do not consider, they do not reform nor amend their ways and their doings, because they do not consider; so in the present case, many cannot pray, because they do not consider. The most thinking Men are, and not without good Reason, looked upon as the wisest Men. So the most thinking Christian is the best Christian, most fit for the great work of Prayer, and most like to prosper in that or in anything else, unto which he shall turn his hand. Only do not rest here, nor take up with your own Thoughts and Studies as if they would be sufficient, but let your Eyes ever be to the Everlasting Hills, from which cometh your help, and humbly beg of God the gracious assistance and influence of his blessed Spirit, who is (as you have heard) a Spirit of Grace and Supplication; and whose work it is to help the infirmities of his poor People, without he fill your Sails you will lie Wind-bound, but if he be in you as he was in Elihu, he will both constrain and enable you; and think with yourselves how acceptable you must needs be to God, and how powerful, yea, prevalent your Prayers with him, if you be some of those blessed ones, who have the Spirit of God making intercession in them, and Jesus Christ the Son of God, at his Fathers right hand in Heaven making intercession for them.

Fourthly, While you are in the conscientious performance of Family duties; curiously take notice and observe what comes of all. A wise Man would do nothing in vain, no more would a wise and serious Christian. I run, said Paul, Corinth. 1.10. Not as uncertainly, so fight I not as one that beateth the Air. He did run as one that hoped to get the price, and he did fight not merely to exercise himself, or to show his Strength and Valor, but with a design and in hope to obtain the Victory. Thus it should be with you and all the Children of God, with reference to duty: you have been Praying, but what answer is there, what return? The Dove hath been sent out is he returned with an

Olive-branch. You have let down your bucket into the Well of Salvation, have you drawn Water with joy? Inquire what you yourselves are the better for it? And whether your Families are the better; do you see less vanity in your young Ones, and more solidity and seriousness than there was before? What amendment is there, and Reformation of things amiss? What Conquests and Victories over Passions? What Patience and contentment under Crosses, Losses, Afflictions, Provocations? What more Reverence and Humility in Duties of Worship. More taking up of the Bible and other good Books to Read? What more attentiveness to wholesome Instructions, and Counsels? What more dutifulness and respect to you in reward? What token of Love from above, what increase of goodness below? It is not good after vows to make enquiry, but to do it after Prayer is very good.

It hath been the practice of Holy Men that are recorded in the Word; when David resolved in the morning to direct his Prayer unto God; he did at the same resolve to look up: Psalm 5.3. He looked to see what would, become of his Prayer, and what God would send in to him after it. When the Prophet Elijah had been Praying for Rain; He sent his Servant to look toward the Sea seven times, and left not till he saw a little Cloud; Kings 1.18.44, and that was to him a token of his speeding. And so again when Habakkuk had been mightily wrestling with God in Prayer for Israel, and against the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty Nation, which should march thorough the breadth of the Land, and gather Captives as the Sand. He said in Habakkuk 2.2. I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon my Tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me. He that Prays much expects much and where there is a hopeful expectation there will be a curious Observation; if any of you do not look after your Prayers when you have put them to God, it is a sign you did not mind them while you made them.

And as I advise you to do thus after Praying, so do the same after your Reading and repeating, and instructing and counseling your Families; the great God doth thus, when he had been at much cost and charge upon his Vineyard. He looked it should bring forth Grapes, and what Grapes it did bring forth? Isaiah 5, our Lord Jesus doth so too. Cant. 6.11. I went down into the garden of nuts, to seek fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded. And when the laborious Countryman hath Sown his Seed, and committed it to the Earth, he frequently goeth into the Field to see how it comes up, and what crop he is like to have. So when the Merchant hath sent his Commodities to Sea, he longs to hear of their safe arrival at the intended Haven, and then waits for a rich return: and what shall your Prayers and pains be neglected and forgotten as things merely thrown away? I grant, they are not worthy God's regarding; but are they not worthy your own? Therefore, I say, when you have been taking pains in your Families, and scattering holy truths and counsels there which are as so much precious Seed; take notice, what place it hath in them, and what power upon them; whether it passeth away as a tale that is told, or roots and abides, and what good comes of it, what fruit there is like to be.

And though you meet with no success as yet, be not weary of well doing; but go on, duty is yours, success is God's, who gives it when, where, and as he pleaseth: follow one counsel with another, one instruction with another, one reproof with another, and one prayer with another; do not sin in ceasing and giving over. Something may come of it at the last. The Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the Earth, and hath long patience. James 5.7. He doth not Sow and Reap in a day, the Seed lies a considerable time in the Furrows buried under the clods; follow then the Wiseman's advise. In the morning Sowe thy Seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand,

for thou knowest not whether shall prosper this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. Eccles. 11.6.

Fifthly, When you set upon holy duties (particularly, that of prayer) see that you be well composed, and enjoy a calmness of Soul; we are required to lift up holy hands, as in faith, without doubting; so in love without wrath. I have known and heard of some that would go chiding and scolding to their Prayer, in a chafe and fret; but are they like to be welcome? Sure, it would be more advisable to stay till they were cooler. God did in a most tremendous manner destroy Nadab, and Abihu for Offering Incense with strange fire; what then must thou expect, who Offerest thine with Hell-fire?

The same Persons will fall into a scolding fit again as soon as the Prayer is over; what think you, doth this speak Grace in their Hearts? Did they pray their Hearts into Heaven? Had they any communion with God, sure if they had, they would have risen off their knees more like to him. When Moses had been in the Mount with God Forty days, at his coming down his face shone; there was a Light, Beauty, and Glory upon his Countenance he did not look, speak, nor act like a fury; besides, how can such a one think, that others should get good by his Prayers, when he himself gets none, or that he should pray any one of this Family into Godliness, when he doth not pray himself into quietness? Thou O Man, being under such a distemper, wouldest not go to thy King, how then darest thou go to thy God? If thou beest touchy and froward at, in, and after thy Prayer, God is not like to be pleased: Psal. 18.26. With the froward He will show himself froward.

Sixthly, Do not choose to live in those Families, where there is not the Worship of God, nor Religious exercises, if thou art only a Lodger in such an house, deal with the Master, and in a Friendly manner put

him upon it, if he will not be persuaded, thou hast cleared thine own Soul, that Family is none of thy charge, therefore that neglect shall not be charged upon thee, only be thou careful to pray by thyself and with thy Family if thou hast one, yea and with his too if he either desires it or will permit it, but why dost thou choose to lodge there? Couldst thou find no other place to pitch thy Tent in? If thou canst, why dost not go to it? Suppose there be where thou now art more outward conveniences, consider God is not there, and it cannot be good living where God is not: for the pleasantness of the place Lot had a mind to dwell in Sodom, but had not God been more merciful to him, he had been consumed in the Flames of that vile City. It was a dismal time with the Egyptians when in every one of their Houses there was one dead, and must it not of necessity be very uncomfortable to thee, if alive unto God, to live in a Family where they are all dead? How did David bemoan himself while in the House of Saul, though a Family unto which he was related, yet because wicked he reckoned it his unhappiness to be there? Psalm 120.5. Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar.

Seventhly, Take none into your Family but those who will keep you company while walking with God. Carnal respect sway with many, after which much mischief follows and the repentance of a whole Life. Accept not of him for thy Husband who cannot or will not live with thee as a man of Knowledge, a Child of God. How shall He help thee on in thy journey to Heaven, who will not himself walk in the way that leads thither. Neither, do thou, O man if fearing God, take her for thy Wife, who will not draw with thee in the Yoke of Christ, but rather despise thee in her Heart, or mock and flout at thee when serving and honoring of the Lord. Some indeed, good natured men do take such in hope of gaining them afterward, but for certain they run a desperate venture, let the Portion be never so great, thou hadst better be without it, than fasten a Clog to thy Heel, or take a Viper

into thy Bosom: let Birds of a Feather get together, what have Birds of Paradise to do with Vultures and Owls? Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a Woman that fears the Lord shall be praised and should be chosen. The like for Servants their skill, parts, strength and fitness are to be looked to, but Godliness is not to be overlooked. A wicked Servant may be a curse, a moth to the house, whereas a gracious one will be a blessing, a treasure.

Lastly, You that are Servants in Prayerless Families, supply that defect if you may have leave, only do it humbly, and double your respects to your Governors, if leave for that be denied, be more in secret Communion with your God, though' they keep a bad House keep you a good Chamber, and if thou mayest honestly remove, do it, the sooner the better. Let not mere secular advantages keep thee there. It is better being out of the warm Sun than out of God's blessing.

And you that are fixed, as a Wife, Child, an Apprentice, count the want of Family-duty as your Affliction, and groan under it as such, and in your private addresses beg down, if possible, Mercy and Grace upon them. Pray heartily for them who will neither pray for you nor for themselves, the godly Wife for the ungodly Husband, the gracious Child for the profane Parent, and the Religious Servant for the Wicked Master or Mistress, yea, wrestle mightily in Prayer for them, and with Jacob weep as well as make supplication, and be sure to live up to the Laws of the Relations you stand in, filling up your days with the duties of your places, that though they will not practice Godliness, they may see the power of it in its influences upon you. If the Wife be peaceable and quiet, loyal and loving, respecting and reverencing her Husband, the Children very dutiful and obedient, the servants submissive, diligent and faithful, everyone walking in the fear of God, giving no cause of quarrelling with you, or blaspheming



Religion for your sakes. In a word, let your whole conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.

You see I have spent a great deal of time and taken no small pains in studying, preaching, and writing out all this discourse. Oh! That it may not be in vain, but all the better that have heard or shall read it; to that end the good Lord accompany it with his Spirit and blessing, bring you to this work, keep you at it, and help you so to manage yourselves and families, that after a Life of Prayer on Earth, you may be taken up to a Life of Praise in Heaven where all your Wants shall be supplied, all your Prayers answered, and all your hopes accomplished, then you will see the Word was your best rule, the Ministers of Christ your real Friends, and Religion your grand Interest, when fury shall be poured out upon them that know not God, and Hell shall receive the Families that call not upon his Name, where there shall be no end of their torment and pain, nor of their roaring, cursing, and blaspheming, of that holy, and righteous, but terrible God, whom they would not be persuaded to love, seek and serve.

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## **A Postscript to Young Ones.**

Having said so much as I have done in this Book to the graver sort of Persons, your Parents, and Governors, dear young ones, and that not only for their sakes, but yours also. I have judged it fit to accompany that advice and counsel to them, with a few words to you, because you likewise are very nearly and greatly concerned, and all means

possible are to be made use of for the preventing your present miscarriage, and eternal ruin.

You are now in the Morning of your Age, and prime of your strength, you have set forth and entered upon that Journey which will certainly bring you to your last home, where you must take up your everlasting abode, from whence there can be no remove, and that will be either Heaven, or Hell, the Glorious Mansions above, or the Bottomless Pit below; where it is absolutely necessary for you to take heed to your ways, and ponder all your goings, to set out right at first, and then to go straight on, without turning either to the right hand, or to the left; otherwise you will be lost, for if the way be not good, the end cannot be peace; as for such as turn aside unto their crooked Paths, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity, Psal. 125.5.

It is too evident, that multitudes of young ones, through corrupt inclination, and bad conduct, have gone out of the way of life betimes, and could never find it afterward. Having made an early choice of Sin, they grew hardened in it, and there being a judicial Tradition of them, to the power thereof, they went on to commit it with greediness, living and dying its Votaries and Vassals; and is it not sad to consider? May it not well be matter of bitter lamentation, that such Excellent Noble Creatures should be spoiled, such precious immortal Souls should be irrecoverably lost, that such sweet and lovely Blossoms should be utterly blasted; that they who once were the hope of their Parents, and might have been the Ornaments and Blessings of their Country, should prove burdens and curses to them both. God forbid that any of you should be so too, for we have too many such already.

Therefore I pray God that you may, and desire that you would be serious betimes; get alone, sit down and consider what you are, where you are, whether you are going? What is for your interest, and what against it? Labor to know, and knowing mind those things which belong unto your peace; youth will not always last, nor the pleasures of it, which you do now count so very sweet and delicious, and run such desperate ventures for the enjoyment of. A Sickness may quickly be sent of God, and cover your faces with a dismal paleness, pick the Marrow out of your Bones, suck all the Milk out of your Breasts, and convert all your strength into weakness, faintness, and trembling's; your smiles may be turned into frowns, your mirth into mourning, your laughter into heaviness, and your songs into sighs, groans, and shrieks. Your own Consciences may arm against you as your enemy, and God may so appear, as to be your terror, and you may be then made to possess the iniquities of your youth, when all the honey is spent, and nothing but the sting left, the pleasure is over, and only the guilt remains, whereby you are bound over to the suffering of the judgment written. If you be not wise in this condition, you may live and die, and then you will see cause to wish you had never been born. O! Be you, I beseech you, be ye your own friends, provide for your own peace and welfare, and instead of working out your Damnation with joy, jollity, and self-pleasing, choose to work out your Salvation with fear and trembling, since all the pleasures of Sin are but for a season; do you seek out for, and make sure of those which are at God's right hand for evermore; and since this life will be but short, when drawn out to its greatest length, do you lay hold upon that which is quite out of the reach of death, that life which came from God, and will be perfected in him.

And know, how great a number soever the Prodigals and Profligate Youths of the present Age do amount to; yet if you will be serious, and truly religious, you will not be alone, there have been many

choice and excellent Persons that went before you; the Names of some, together with their Character, you meet with in the Sacred Records, an Isaac who loved Meditation, a Jacob that was set for the blessing, and by a Vow bound himself to have and own the Lord for his God. And Abijah, the Son of Jeroboam, in whom there was found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel. An Obadiah, that feared the Lord from his youth, a Josiah, whose heart was tender, so that he humbled himself, and wept before the Lord; a young John that was the Beloved Disciple of our Lord Jesus, and lay in his Bosom, and a Timothy, who knew the Scriptures of a Child: And this Age, as vile as it is, is not altogether barren, but some such are to be found among us, though too few, the Lord knoweth, too too few, if compared with the rest of the World; do you, dear hearts, add to the number, be you Trees of Righteousness, Plants of Renown.

Two things I do earnestly desire for you, viz. that you may be holy now, and happy forever; that you may spend your time as you ought, and then have a blessed Eternity; live to purpose, and die in peace, Husband and lay out this life wisely, and make sure of a better. I wish you the good things of this World, full out so far, and so much as will be good for you, but withal, better things too; for really, such is my esteem of you, that however the Sons of the Earth rate them, I look not upon them as good enough to make up a Portion for you, they are too little, and low and fading, they perish in the using; may Jehovah, whose is the Earth and fullness thereof, bestow upon you such a part as will make you serviceable to him, and life comfortable to you, and while you have it, so use and improve it, that when it shall fail you, you may not miss of the delights and glories of Eternity.

To this end, I beseech you begin betimes, do not embezzle and squander away your choicest Seasons, your golden hours, lay not out

the very best you have upon the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, thinking to reserve for God the dregs and refuse; Oh! How sweet is early Religion! How beautiful a green head found in the way of Righteousness! How pleasant to see tender Plants bringing forth Fruit unto God? Are you descended of good Parents, do not degenerate, let the Faith that was in them be in you also; like precious Faith are your Lines cast in Religious Families, walk worthy of the mercy, and keep peace with them in the way of God. It is your unhappiness to be in wicked Families, do not learn their ways, partake not with them in their Sins, be not tainted by them, nor worse for them, remembering there were Saints in Nero 's House; and that it is great indeed, truly noble to be good in the midst of bad examples, of many discouragements, and of great opposition; such I would fain have you to be, and the more such the better. That you may be such, beg of God by Prayer, and consider what I can but hint to you.

Study well your own case, the vileness of your hearts, and the miserableness of your State by Nature, whatever you have to commend you unto Men; there is more than enough to render you odious and abominable unto God. Abhor therefore yourselves, bewail your condition, and get out of it as fast as you can, which you can no other way do, but by getting into Christ, who is the only City of Refuge, unto which Sinners may flee for safety, the Rock of Salvation in which they may hide, and upon it build; who died that he might redeem from Sin and Wrath, and lives to receive and embrace all those that come unto him; go then to him, and beg of him, that you may be washed with his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit, that he would please to be a Principle of Spiritual Life in you, and the Author of Eternal Salvation to you. Be thankful for restraints, that you are not so bad as others; but rest not in them, nor in any external performances, or the most lovely form of Godliness, but look after a

saving change, that there be in you the root of the matter, an heart sincerely set against sin, and for God. Avoid all loose bad Company, even as you would the Devil, for his Children they are, and the works of the Father they will do, and his designs they will be carrying on in all places where they are. Can a Man touch Pitch, and not be defiled therewith? Or familiarly converse with wicked Men, or lewd vain Women, and not be in danger of learning their manner? Walk with wise Men, so you may learn wisdom, delight in them that fear the Lord, and associate with those here, with whom you would choose to be in the other World. Be not strangers to the necessary and excellent duty of Prayer, but delight to make it your business every day; keep not away from Family-duties, but bless God for them, and be serious and fervent in them, yet think not yourselves by them discharged from attendance upon God, and seeking his face in your private retirements; honor your Parents, and other Governors, and study to please them well in all things in the Lord. Open your ear to Doctrine, and be ready to learn and practice all that is good. Hear the instruction of your Father, and forsake not the Law of your Mother, let them not depart from your eyes, but keep them in the midst of your heart, for they are life unto them that find them, and health unto all their Flesh. In your behavior be sober, modest, and chaste, humble and loving to all you have to do with, faithful to your trust, and diligent in your business, mind your Masters interest as much as if it were your own, God will bless you the better for it: when you are removed from all Spectators, so that nobody on earth sees you, remember there is one above that doth, and let that awe and preserve you from sin, for he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Love all virtue and goodness, hate all vice, all filthiness, both of Flesh and Spirit; govern yourselves well, keep your hearts with all diligence, make a Covenant with your eyes, set a watch before the door of your lips, give honor to Superiors, be respective to your equals, courteous to your inferiors, civil and obliging to all; morose and imperious,

froward and quarrelsome with none; wise and prudent in looking to your Concerns, and managing all your Affairs; consider every motion that is made to you, before you embrace and close with it; ponder your actions before you do them, that you may not make more work for Repentance than you need, and weigh your words before you speak them. Moses suffered greatly for speaking unadvisedly with his lips; keep yourselves from Sin, as that which tends to your destruction, and avoid vanity and lightness, as that which will issue in your disparagement.

Sweet youth, let me persuade and prevail with you to remember your Creator in the days of your youth; own him as your great Lord, from whom you had your being, upon whom you have your dependence, and unto whom you must be accountable for your time and talents; and all that you have done in the Body: make God your choice, this is your choosing time, oh! Choose well, choose God for your sweetest Companion, walk with him as Noah did, and Enoch, and all the Saints in their several Generations. When you awake be still with him, be continually with him, let your fellowship be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Eye God as the most perfect pattern, and study imitation, be ye followers of him as dear Children, holy as he is holy, and live to God as your noblest end, do all to his glory, if you make his glory your end, he will make use of your Salvation as a means thereto, so that both means and end shall be secured; count his fear your treasure; Hezekiah valued it more than his Royal Exchequer, or his Peoples Purses; be you in it all the day, fear him now as a Father, that you may not at last tremble before him as a Judge, nor be glad to have Rocks and Mountains fall upon you, and hide you from his face, and wrath. Oh! Let Jesus Christ be precious to you, as he is to all them that believe, sell all for that Pearl of Price; part with your sins, and your own Righteousness, all confidence in the Flesh, yea, and whatsoever you have in the World, rather than go

without him; take him in all his Offices, learn of him as your Prophet, trust in him as your Priest, and submit to him as your King; follow him in all his ways, and be expressive of him in your own; show forth the virtues, the humility, meekness, patience, holiness, heavenly mindedness of him who hath called you unto his Kingdom, and Glory.

Ask of God that Holy Spirit, which is a Spirit of Love and Power, and a sound mind, that he may convince you of Sin, and Righteousness, and Judgment, lead you into all truth, help your infirmities, strengthen you with all might in the inner-Man, quicken and enlarge you, revive and comfort you, sealing you up to the day of Redemption, and beware of resisting, quenching, or grieving him.

Acquaint yourselves well with the Scriptures, read them every day, study them, meditate in them, pray for the opening of your eyes, that you may see the wondrous things of the Law, and the precious things of the Gospel; make them your delight, and your Counselors, receiving no Doctrine as true but what they own, nor any practice as good, which they do not allow; eye them as the rule of Faith, and Manners, hide them in your heads and hearts, that you may not sin against God; know the truth, love, and live in it.

Get Consciences rightly informed, and consult them, and be ready to hear them, do not cross them, but make it your daily exercise to keep them void of offense both toward God, and toward Man; remembering that Conscience is God's Deputy, which curiously observes, and carefully records thoughts, words, and actions; is more than a thousand Witnesses, will be a sweet Comforter, or dreadful Tormentor.

In short, set God always before you, live by faith upon him, in obedience to him, and communion with him, frequently and



seriously think of Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. So carry, that you may not be a curse to the World, nor a grief to your Friends while you live, nor a terror to yourselves when you come to die. My hearts desire and Prayer for you is, that God would doth bless you, and make you blessings.

FINIS.

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