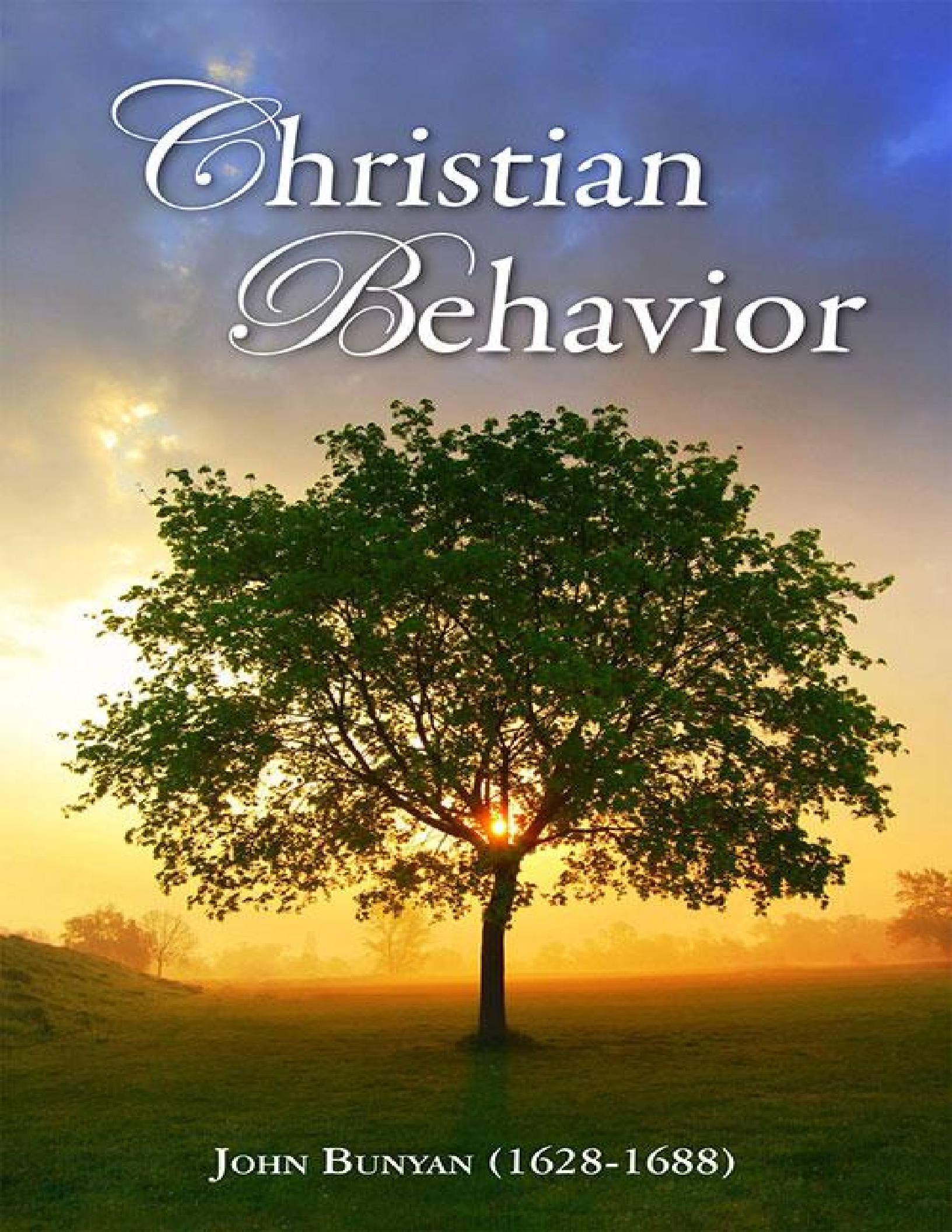
Christian Behavior



John Bunyan (1628-1688)

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Christian Behavior

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs
according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou
affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain
good works. These things are good and
profitable unto men."—Titus 3:7-8

Introduction

I shall not at this time discourse of every particular at large included in these words; but shall briefly fall upon those things that I judge most necessary for the people of God. Neither shall I need to make any great preamble to the words for their explication; they themselves being plain, and without that ambiguity that calleth for such a thing. The general scope being this, *that they which have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works*.

But yet, to prosecute what I intend, with what clearness I may, I shall in a word or two make way for what is to be the *main*[1] of this book.

"This is a faithful saying." This—which? Why, that which goeth before, namely, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly."

Why so?

Why, "That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." The meaning is that the way to provoke others to good works is constantly—in the evidence and demonstration of the spirit—to show them the certainty of their [these believers] being by grace made heirs of eternal life.

From this scripture, therefore, I do gather these things observable.

First, that good works do flow from faith. Yea,

Second, that every one that believeth should be careful that their works be good.

Third, that every believer should not only be careful that their works be good, and for the present do them, but should also be careful to

maintain them. That is, they should carefully study to keep in a constant course of good works.

Fourth, and lastly, that the best way to provoke both ourselves and others to this work, it is to be often affirming to others the doctrine of justification by grace, and to believe it ourselves: “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will,” saith Paul, “that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.”

1. Good Works Flow from Faith.

I begin with the first— that good works do flow from faith. This is evident divers [2] ways.

First, from the impossibility of their flowing from any other thing. They must either flow from faith, or not at all: "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). And again,

"Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb 11:6). Every man by nature, before faith, is an evil and a corrupt tree; and a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Mat 7:16-17). Now a man is made good by faith, and by that bringeth forth the fruits that are acceptable to God (Heb 11:4; Col 1:4-6).

Wherefore sinners, before faith, are compared to the wilderness, whose fruits are briars and thorns; and whose hearts are the habitation of dragons, that is, of devils [3] (Isa 35:6-7; Heb 6:7-8).

And hence again it is, that they are said to be Godless, Christless, Spiritless, faithless, hopeless; without the covenant of grace, without strength; enemies in their minds by wicked works, and possessed by the spirit of wickedness as a castle by a conqueror (Eph 2:12; Jude 19; 2Th 3:2; Col 1:21; Luk 11:21).

Now, these things being thus, it is impossible that all the men under heaven that are unconverted should be able to bring forth one work rightly good; even as impossible as for all the briars and thorns under heaven to bring forth one cluster of grapes, or one bunch of figs; for indeed they want[4] the qualification. A thorn bringeth not forth figs, because it wanteth the nature of the fig-tree; and so doth the bramble the nature of the vine. Good works must come from a good heart. Now, this the unbeliever wanteth, because he wanteth faith; for it is that which purifieth the heart (Luk 6:45; Act 15:9). Good works must come from love to the Lord Jesus; but this the unbeliever wanteth also, because he wanteth faith: for faith "worketh by love," and by that means doth good (Gal 5:6).

And hence again it is that though the carnal man[5] doth never so[6] much which he calleth good, yet it is rejected, slighted, and turned as dirt in his face again. His prayers are abominable (Pro 15:8), his ploughing is sin (Pro 21:4), and all his righteousness as menstruous rags (Isa 64:6).

Thus you see that without faith there are no good works.

Now then, to show you that they flow from faith: and that, for that *faith* is a principle of life by which a Christian lives (Gal 2:19-20), a principle of motion by which he walks towards heaven in the way of holiness (Rom 4:12; 2Co 5:7). It is also a principle of strength, by which the soul opposeth its lust, the devil, and this world, and overcomes them. "This is the victory, even our faith" (1Jo 5:4-5) Faith, in the heart of a Christian, is like the salt that was thrown into the corrupt fountain, that made the naughty [7] waters good, and the barren land fruitful (2Ki 2:19-22). Faith, when it is wrought in the heart, is like leaven hid in the meal (Mat 13:33), or like perfume that lighteth upon stinking leather, turning the smell of the leather into the savour of the perfume; faith being then planted in the heart, and having its natural inclination to holiness. Hence it is that there followeth an alteration of the life and conversation, and so bringeth forth fruit accordingly. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good" (Luk 6:45). Which treasure, I say, is this faith (Jam 2:5; 1Pe 1:7). And therefore it is that faith is called "the faith according to godliness," (Ti 1:1) and the "most holy faith" (Jud 20).

Second, Good works must needs flow from faith, or no way; because that alone carrieth in it an argument sufficiently prevalent to win upon our natures, to make them comply with holiness.

Faith showeth us that God loveth us, that He forgiveth us our sins, that He accounteth us for His children, having freely justified us through the blood of His Son (Rom 3:24-25; 4; Heb 11:13; 1Pe 1:8).

Faith receiveth the promise, embraceth it, and comforteth the soul unspeakably with it. Faith is so great an artist in arguing and reasoning with the soul, that it will bring over the hardest heart that it hath to deal with. It will bring to my remembrance at once both my vileness against God, and His goodness towards me; it will show me, that though I deserve not to breathe in the air, yet that God will have me an heir of glory.

Now, there is no argument greater than this. This will make a man run through ten thousand difficulties to answer God, though he never can, for the grace He hath bestowed on him.

Further, *faith* will show me how distinguishingly this love of God hath set itself upon me. It will show me that though Esau was Jacob's brother, yet He loved Jacob (Mal 1:2). That though there were thousands

more besides me that were as good as me, yet I must be the man that must be chosen.

Now this, I say, is a marvelous argument, and unspeakably prevaileth with the sinner, as saith the apostle: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live," that is, by faith, "should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2Co 5:14-15). "Love," saith the wise man, "is strong as death…Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned" [8] (Song 8:6-7). Oh! When the broken, dying, condemned soul can but see, by faith, the love of a tender-hearted Saviour, and also see what He underwent to deliver it from under that death, guilt, and hell, that now it feels and fears—which also it knoweth it hath most justly and highly deserved—then "Bless the LORD, O my soul" (Psa 103:1); and "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits?" (Psa 116:12; see vv. 1-14).

Thus is faith a prevailing argument to the sinner, whereby he is fetched off from what he was, and constrained to bend and yield to what before he neither would nor could (1Co 2:14; Rom 8:7).

And hence it is, that Gospel obedience is called "the obedience of faith," as well as obedience *to* the faith (Rom 16:26). For it must be by the faith of Christ in my heart that I submit to the Word of faith in the Bible, otherwise all is to no profit—as saith the apostle, "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb 4:2). For faith alone can see the reality of what the Gospel saith; and so I say, argue over the heart to the embracing of it.

Third, Faith is such a grace as will represent to the soul all things in their proper colours. It doth not, as doth unbelief and ignorance, show us all things out of order, putting darkness for light, and bitter for sweet, but will set everything in its proper place before our eyes. God and Christ shall be with it the chiefest good, the most lovely and amiable. A heavenly life shall be of greater esteem, and more desirable, than all the treasures of Egypt! Righteousness and sanctification will be the thing after which it will most vehemently press, because it seeth not only death and damnation as the fruits of sin, but sin also in itself, distinct from the punishment

belonging to it, a detestable, horrible, and odious thing (Heb 11:25-27; Phi 3:7-12; Rom 12:9).

By faith we see that this world hath no abiding in it for us, nor any satisfaction if it were otherwise (Pro 3:35; Heb 11:15-16; 13:14; 1Co 7:9-31). And hence[9] it is that the people of God have groaned to be gone from hence, into a state that is both sinless and temptationless. And hence it is again that they have run through so many trials, afflictions, and adversities, even because of that love to holiness of life that faith being in their hearts did prompt them to, by showing them the worth and durableness of that which was good, and the irksomeness and evil of all things else (2Co 5:1-8; Heb 11:33-39).

Fourth, Faith layeth hold of that which is able to help the soul to bring forth good works; it layeth hold of, and engageth the strength of Christ, and by that overcometh that which oppresseth. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phi 4:13).

In a word, a life of holiness and godliness in this world doth so inseparably follow a principle of faith that it is both monstrous and ridiculous to suppose the contrary. What, shall not he that hath life have motion (Gal 2:20)! He that hath by faith received the Spirit of holiness, shall not he be holy? (Gal 3:2). And he that is called to glory and virtue, shall not he add to his faith virtue (2Pe 1:4-5)? We are by faith made good trees, and shall not we bring forth good fruit (Luk 6:43)? They that believe are created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and God hath, before the world was, ordained that we should walk in them; and shall both our second creation, and God’s foreordination be made frustrate (Eph 1:4; 2:10)? Besides, the children of faith are the children of light, and of the day (1Th 5:5). Lights upon a hill, and candles on a candlestick, and shall not they shine? They are the salt of the earth; shall not they be seasoning (Mat 5:13-16)?

The believer is the alone man by whom God showeth to the world the power of His grace, the operation of His people’s faith, and so forth. The unbelievers read indeed of the power of grace; of the faith, hope, love, joy, peace, and sanctification of the heart of the Christian; but they feel nothing of that sin-killing operation that is in these things; these are to them as a story of Rome or Spain. Wherefore to show them in others, what they find not in themselves, God worketh faith, hope, love, and so forth, in a generation that shall serve him; and by them they shall see what they

cannot find in themselves. And by this means they shall be convinced, that though sin and the pleasures of this life be sweet to them, yet there is a people otherwise minded; even such a people that do indeed see the glory of that which others read of, and from that sight take pleasure in those things which they are most averse unto. To this, I say, are Christians called; herein is God glorified; hereby are sinners convinced; and by this the world condemned (1Th 4:7; 1Pe 2:12; 3:1; Heb 11:7).

Objection

But if faith doth so naturally cause good works, what then is the reason that God's people find it so hard a matter to be fruitful in good works?

Answer

1. God's people are fruitful in good works according to the proportion of their faith. If they be slender in good works, it is because they are weak in faith. Little faith is like small candles, or weak fire, which though they shine and have heat, yet but dim shining and small heat, when compared with bigger candles and greater fire. The reason why Sardis had some in it whose works were not perfect before God—it was because they did not hold fast by faith the Word that they had formerly heard and received (Rev 3:1-3).

2. There may be a great mistake in our judging of our own fruitfulness. The soul that indeed is candid and right at heart is taught by grace to judge itself, though fruitful, yet barren upon two accounts. (1.) When it compareth its life to the mercy bestowed upon it: for when a soul doth indeed consider the greatness and riches of the mercy bestowed upon it, then it must needs cry out, "O wretched man that I am," (Rom 7:24) for it seeth itself wonderfully [10] to fall short of a conversation[11] becoming one who hath received so great a benefit. (2.) It may also judge itself barren, because it falleth so far short of that it would attain unto; it "cannot do the thing that (it) would" (Gal 5:17).

3. The heart of a Christian is naturally very barren, upon which though the seed of grace, that is the fruitfullest of all seeds, be sown, yet the heart is naturally subject to bring forth weeds (Mat 15:19). Now, to have a good crop from such ground doth argue the fruitfulness of the seed. Wherefore I conclude upon these three things, (1.) That the seed of faith is a very fruitful seed, in that it will be fruitful in so barren a soil. (2.) That faith is not beholden to the heart, but the heart to it, for all its fruitfulness.

(3.) That therefore the way to be a more fruitful Christian: it is to be stronger in believing.

2. Believers be Careful that Works *are* Good

Now for the second thing—to wit,[12] that every one that believeth should be careful that their works be good.

This followeth from what went just before; to wit, that the heart of a Christian is a heart subject to bring forth weeds.

There is flesh as well as Spirit in the best of saints: and as the Spirit of grace will be always putting forth something that is good, so the flesh will be putting forth continually that which is evil. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal 5:17).

Now this considered is the cause why you find so often in the Scriptures so many items and cautions to the Christians to look to their lives and conversations, as, "Keep thy heart with all diligence" (Pro 4:23). "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1Co 16:13). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal 6:7-8).

All works are not good that seem to be so. It is one thing for a man's ways to be right in his own eye, and another for them to be right in God's. Often "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luk 16:15).

Seeing corruption is not yet out of our natures, there is a proneness in us to build [even] upon the right foundation, wood, hay, and stubble, instead of gold and silver, and precious stones (1Co 3:11-15). How was both David the king, Nathan the prophet, and Uzza the priest, deceived, touching good works! (1Ch 17:1-4; 13:9-11). Peter also, in both his defending his Master in the garden, and in dissuading of Him from His sufferings, though both out of love and affection to his Master, was deceived touching good works. (Mat 16:22-23; Joh 18:10-11). Many have miscarried both as to *doctrine*, *worship*, and the *prosecution* of each.

First, for doctrine. Christ tells the Jews, that they taught for the doctrines of God the doctrines and traditions of men (Mat 15:9; Mar 7:7).

As also, saith the apostle, they teach "things they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Ti 1:11).

Second, Also touching *worship*, we find how frequently men have mistaken, both for time, place, and matter, with which they worshipped.

1. For *time*. It hath been that which man hath devised, not which God hath commanded (1Ki 12:32). They "change the ordinance," saith Isaiah, 24:5. They change God's "judgments into wickedness," saith Ezekiel 5:6.

2. For *place*. When they should have worshipped at Jerusalem, they worshipped at Bethel, at Gilgal and Dan, in gardens, under poplars and elms. (1Ki 12:26-30; Hos 4:13-15; Isa 65:2-5).

3. For the *matter* with which they worshipped. Instead of bringing according to the commandment, they brought the lame, the torn, and the sick; they would sanctify themselves in gardens, with swine's flesh and mice, when they should have done it at Jerusalem, with bullocks and lambs (Isa 66:17).

Third, Again, touching men's *prosecuting* their zeal for their worship, and so forth, that they do think right; how hot hath it been though with no reason at all? Nebuchadnezzar will have his fiery furnace and Darius his lions' den for Nonconformists[13] (Dan 3:6; 6:7) Again, they have persecuted men even to strange cities; have laid traps and snares in every corner, to entrap and to entangle their words; and if they could at any time but kill the persons that dissented from them, they would think they did God good service (Act 26:11; Luk 11:53-54; Joh 19:1-2). But what need we look so far from home, were it not that I would seal my sayings with truth. We need look no farther to affirm this position, than to the Papists and their companions. How many have they in all ages hanged, burned, starved, drowned, racked, dismembered, and murdered, both openly and in secret? And all under a pretence of God, His worship, and good works.[14] Thus you see how wise men and fools, saints and sinners, Christians and heathens, have erred in the business of good works; wherefore every one should be careful to see that their works *be* good.

Now then, to prevent, if God will, miscarriage in this matter, I shall propound unto you what it is for a work to be rightly good. *First*, A good work must have the Word for its authority. *Second*, It must, as afore was said, flow from faith. *Third*, It must be both rightly timed and rightly placed. *Fourth*, It must be done willingly, cheerfully, and so on

First, It must have the Word for its authority. Zeal without knowledge is like a mettled[15] horse without eyes, or like a sword in a madman's hand; and there is no knowledge where there is not the Word: for if they reject the Word of the Lord, and act not by that, 'what wisdom is in them?' saith the prophet (Jer 8:9; Isa 8:20). Wherefore see thou have the Word for what thou dost.

Second, As there must be the Word for the authorizing of what thou dost, so there must be faith, from which it must flow, as I showed you before: "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" and "without faith it is impossible to please God." Now, I say, without the Word there is no faith, (Rom 10:17), as without faith there is no good—let men's pretences be what they will.

Third, As it must have these two aforenamed, so also it must have,
1. Right time; and, 2. Right place.

1. It must be rightly timed. Every work is not to be done at the same time; every time not being convenient for such a work. There is a time for all things, and every thing is beautiful in its time (Ecc 3:11). There is a time to pray, a time to hear, a time to read, a time to confer, a time to meditate, a time to do, and a time to suffer. Now, to be hearing when we should be preaching and doing, that is, yielding active obedience to that under which we ought to suffer, is not good. Christ was very wary[16] that both His doings and sufferings were rightly timed (Joh 2:3-4; 13:1-2). And herein we ought to follow His steps. To be at plough in the field when I should be hearing the Word is not good; and to be talking abroad when I should be instructing my family at home is as bad: "Whoso keepeth the commandment, shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment" (Ecc 8:5). Good things mistimed,are fruitless, unprofitable, and vain.

2. As things must have their right time, so they must be *rightly placed*; for the misplacing of any work is as bad as the mistiming of it. When I say, things, if good, must be rightly placed, I mean, we should not give to any work more than the Word of God alloweth it, neither should we give it less. Mint, anise, and cummin are not so weighty matters as faith and the love of God, as in Matthew 23:23. For a pastor to be exercising the office of a deacon instead of the office of a pastor, it is misplacing of works (Act 6:2). For Martha to be making outward provision for Christ, when she should have sat at His feet to hear His Word, was the misplacing

a work; and for her sister to have done it at her request—though the thing in itself was good—had been her sin also (Luk 10:39-42).

Now, to prevent the misplacing of good works,

(1.) They misplace them that set them in the room[17] of Christ (Rom 10:1-3).

(2.) They also misplace them that make them copartners with Him (Rom 9:31-32; Act 15:1). This is setting up our post by God's posts, and man's righteousness by the righteousness of Christ (Eze 43:7-8). These are said to be teachers of the Law, not knowing what they say, nor whereof they affirm (1Ti 1:7).

(3.) They also misplace works who ascribe to a work of less moment that honour that belongeth to a work more noble. And such are (*a*) Those who count the ceremonial part of an ordinance as good as the doctrine and signification of it.[18] (*b*) Such who account the dictates and impulses of a mere natural conscience as good, as high, and divine, as the leadings and movings of the Spirit of Christ. (*c*) Those also who count it enough to do something of what God hath commanded, and that something, possibly the least, instead of all and the things more necessary and weighty. (*d*) They also much misplace them, who count things indifferent as high as those that are absolutely necessary in the worship of God. (*e*) But the grosser, who place men's traditions above them. (*f*) And they greatest of all, who put bitter for sweet, and darkness for light. All these things we must shun and avoid, as things absolutely obstructive to good works.

Wherefore touching good works: obedience is better than sacrifice. That is, to do things according to the Word of God is better than to do them according to my fancy and conceit (1Sa 15:22). "Wherefore, let all things be done decently and in order" (1Co 14:40).

Fourth, Again, as good works should be ordered and qualified, as before is touched, so they should be done from the heart, willingly, cheerfully, with simplicity and charity, according to what a man hath (1Jo 5:3; 2Co 9:7; Rom 12:8; Col 3:12; 1Co 10:24; 2Co 8:12).

Farther, there are three things that a man should have in his eye in every work he doth. 1. The honour of God (1Co 6:20). 2. The edification of his neighbour (1Co 14:26). 3. The expediency or inexpediency of what I am to do (1Co 6:12). And always observe it, that the honour of God is wrapped up in the edification of thy neighbour; and the edification of thy neighbour in the expediency of what thou dost.

Again, if thou wouldst walk to the edification of thy neighbour, and so to God's honour in the midst of thy observers, beware,

1st. That thou in thy words and carriages[19] dost so demean thyself that Christ in His precious benefits may be with clearness spoken forth by thee. And take heed that thou dost not enter into doubtful points with them that are weak (Rom 15:1). But deal chiefly, lovingly, and wisely, with their consciences about those matters that tend to their establishment in the faith of their justification, and deliverance from death and hell. "Comfort the feeble-minded, support (confirm) the weak" (1Th 5:14).

2ndly. If thou be stronger than thy brother, take heed that thou do not that before him that may offend his weak conscience; I mean, things that in themselves may be lawful. All that is lawful is not expedient; all that is lawful edifieth not (1Co 6:12). Wherefore here is thy wisdom and love, that thou in some things deny thyself for thy brother's sake. "I will eat no flesh while the world standeth," saith Paul, "lest I make my brother to offend" (1Co 8:13). Wherefore have this faith to thyself before God (Rom 14:22). But if thou walk otherwise, know thou walkest not charitably, and so not to edification, and so not to Christ's honour, but dost sin against Christ, and wound thy weak brother, for whom Christ died (Rom 14:15; 1Co 8:12).

But I say, all this while keep thy eye upon the Word, take heed of going contrary to that under any pretence whatever; for without the Word there is nothing to God's glory, nor thy brother's edification. Wherefore, walk "wisely in a perfect way" (Psa 101:2-3).

Having thus, in few words, showed you what are works rightly good, I beseech you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that you put yourselves into a conscientious performance of them, that you may, while you live here, be vessels of honour, and fit for the master's use, and prepared to every good work (1Ti 6:18). Study to "approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (Phi 1:10). Covet communion with God: "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1Co 12:31). Ah! We that are redeemed from among men (Rev 14:4), and that rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (Rom 5:2), we that look, I say, for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Ti 2:13), "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2Pe 3:11).

To conclude, for your farther edification, take a plain rehearsal of your several general duties and works, to which God engageth you in His Word, according to your places, callings, and relations in this world;

Duties of the Master of a Family

If thou have under thee a family, then thou art to consider the several relations thou standest under; and art to know, that thou in each of them hast a work to do for God, and that He expecteth thy faithful deportment under every one of them. As, in general;

Duty to the Family in General.

He that is the master of a family: he hath, as under that relation, a work to do for God; to wit, the right governing of his own family. And his work is twofold. *First*, Touching the *spiritual state thereof. Second*, Touching the *outward state thereof.*

First, As touching the *spiritual state of his family;* he ought to be very diligent and circumspect, doing his utmost endeavor both to increase faith where it is begun, and to begin it where it is not. Wherefore, to this end, he ought diligently and frequently to lay before his household such things of God, out of His Word, as are suitable for each particular. And let no man question his rule in the Word of God for such a practice, for if the thing itself were but of good report, and a thing tending to civil honesty—it is within the compass and bounds even of nature itself, and ought to be done—much more things of a higher nature. Besides, the apostle exhorts us to "Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just….pure…lovely… of good report… think of them" (Phi 4:8), that is, to be mindful to do them. But to be conversant in this godly exercise in our family is very worthy of praise, and doth much become all Christians. This is one of the things for which God so highly commended His servant Abraham, and that with which His heart was so much affected. I know Abraham, saith God, "I know him" to be a good man in very deed, for "he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD" (Gen 18:19). This was a thing also which good Joshua designed should be his practice as long as he had a breathing time in this world. "As for me," saith he, "and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Jos 24:15).

Further, we find also in the New Testament, that they are looked upon as Christians of an inferior rank that have not a due regard to this duty; yea, so inferior as not fit to be chosen to any office in the Church of God. A [bishop or] pastor must be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? The deacons also, saith he, must be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children, and their own houses well (1Ti 3:2, 4-5, 12). Mark a little, the apostle seems to lay down thus much, that a man that governs his family well, hath one qualification belonging to a pastor or deacon in the house of God, for he that knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? Which thing considered, it giveth us light into the work of the master of a family, touching the governing of his house.

1. A pastor must be sound and uncorrupt in his doctrine; and indeed so must the master of a family (Ti 1:9; Eph 6:4).

2. A pastor should be apt to teach, to reprove, and to exhort; and so should the master of a family (1Ti 3:2; Deu 6:7).

3. A pastor must himself be exemplary in faith and holiness; and so also should the master of a family (1Ti 3:2-4; 4:12). "I," saith David, "will behave myself wisely in a perfect way…I will walk in," or before, "my house with a perfect heart" (Psa 101:2).

4. The pastor is for getting the Church together; and when they are so come together, then to pray among them, and to preach unto them. This is also commendable in Christian masters of families.

Objection-

But my family is ungodly and unruly, touching all that is good. What shall I do?

Answer-

1. Though this be true, yet thou must rule them, and not they thee! Thou are set over them of God, and thou art to use the authority which God hath given thee, both to rebuke their vice, and to show them the evil of their rebelling against the Lord. This did Eli, though not enough; and thus did David (1Sa 2:24-25; 1Ch 28:9). Also, thou must tell them how sad thy state was when thou wast in their condition, and so labour to recover them out of the snare of the devil (Mar 5:19).

2. Thou oughtest also to labour to draw them forth to God's public worship, if peradventure[20] God may convert their souls. Saith Jacob to

his household, and to all that were about him, ‘”Let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress” (Gen 35:3). Hannah would carry Samuel to Shiloh, that he might abide with God for ever (1Sa 1:22). Indeed a soul rightly touched, will labour to draw, not only their families, but a whole city after Jesus Christ (Joh 4:28-30).

3. If they are obstinate, and will not go forth with thee, then do thou get godly and sound men to thy house, and there let the Word of God be preached when thou hast, as Cornelius, gathered thy family and friends together (Act 10).

You know that the jailor, Lydia, Crispus, Gaius, Stephanus, and others, had not only themselves, but their families, made gracious by the Word preached, and that some of them, if not all, by the Word preached in their houses (Act 16:14-34; 18:7-8; 1Co 1:16). And this, for ought I know, might be one reason among many, why the apostles taught in their day not only publicly, but from house to house. I say, that they might, if possible, bring in those in some family which yet remained unconverted and in their sins (Act 10:24; 20:20-21). For some, you know how usual it was in the day of Christ, to invite Him to their houses if they had any afflicted, that either would not or could not come unto Him (Luke 7:2-3; 8:41). If this be the way with those that have outward diseases in their families, how much more then, where there are souls that have need of Christ, to save them from death and eternal damnation!

4. Take heed that thou do not neglect family duties among them thyself, as reading the Word and prayer. If thou hast one in thy family that is gracious, take encouragement. Nay, if thou art alone, yet know that thou hast both liberty to go to God through Christ, and also art at that time in a capacity of having the universal Church join with thee for the whole number of those that shall be saved.

5. Take heed that thou suffer not any ungodly, profane, or heretical books, or discourse in thy house. “Evil communications corrupt good manners” (1Co 15:33). I mean such profane or heretical books, and so forth, as either tend to provoke to looseness of life, or such as do oppose the fundamentals of the Gospel. I know that Christians must be allowed their liberty as to things indifferent; but for those things that strike either at faith or holiness, they ought to be abandoned by all Christians, and especially by the pastors of Churches, and masters of families—which

practice was figured out by Jacob's commanding his house, and all that was with him, to put away the strange gods from among them, and to change their garments (Gen 35:2). All those in the Acts set a good example for this, who took their curious books and burned them before all men, though they were worth fifty thousand pieces of silver (Act 19:18-19). The neglect of this fourth particular hath occasioned ruin in many families, both among children and servants. It is easier for vain talkers and their deceivable works to subvert whole households than many are aware of (Ti 1:10-11). Thus much touching the spiritual state of thy household. And now to its outward.

Second, Touching the *outward state of thy family,* thou art to consider these three things.

1. That it lieth upon thee to care for them that they have a convenient[21] livelihood. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1Ti 5:8). But mark, when the Word saith thou art to provide for thy house, it giveth thee no license to distracting carefulness; neither doth it allow thee to strive to grasp the world in thy heart, or coffers, nor to take care for years or days to come, but so to provide for them, that they may have food and raiment; and if either they or thou be not content with that, you launch out beyond the rule of God (1Ti 6:8; Mat 6:34). This is to labour, that you may have wherewith "to maintain good works for necessary uses" (Ti 3:14). And never object that unless you reach farther it will never do, for that is but unbelief. The Word saith that God feedeth ravens, careth for sparrows, and clotheth the grass—in which three, to feed, clothe, and care for, is as much as heart can wish (Luk 12:6-28).

2. Therefore though thou shouldest provide for thy family, yet let all thy labour be mixed with moderation. "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Phi 4:5). Take heed of driving so hard after this world as to hinder thyself and family from those duties towards God which thou art by grace obliged to: as private prayer, reading the scriptures, and Christian conference. It is a base thing for men so to spend themselves and families after this world as that they disengage their heart to God's worship.

Christians, "The time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not…And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth

away" (1Co 7:29-31). Many Christians live and do in this world as if religion were but a by-business, and this world the one thing necessary; when indeed all the things of this world are but things by the by, and religion only the one thing needful (Luk 10:40-42).

3. If thou wouldst be such a master of a family as becomes thee, thou must see that there be that Christian harmony among those under thee, as becomes that house where one ruleth that feareth God.

(1.) Thou must look that thy children and servants be under subjection to the Word of God; for though it is of God only to rule the heart, yet He expecteth that thou shouldest rule their outward man; which if thou dost not, he may in a short time cut off all thy stock, [even every male] (1Sa 3:11-14). See therefore that thou keep them temperate in all things, in apparel, in language, that they be not gluttons, nor drunkards; not suffering either thy children vainly to domineer over thy servants, nor they again to carry themselves foolishly towards each other.

(2.) Learn to distinguish between that injury that in thy family is done to thee, and that which is done to God. And though thou oughtest to be very zealous for the Lord, and to bear nothing that is open transgression to Him, yet here will be thy wisdom, to pass by personal injuries, and to bury them in oblivion. Love covereth "the multitude of sins" (1Pe 4:8). Be not then like those that will rage and stare like madmen when they are injured; and yet either laugh, or at least not soberly rebuke, and warn, when God is dishonoured.

Rule thy own house well, having thy children—with others in thy family—in subjection, with all gravity (1Ti 3:4). Solomon was so excellent sometimes this way that he made the eyes of his beholders to dazzle (2Ch 9:3-4).[22] But to break off from this general, and to come to particulars.

Duty in Relation to the Wife.

Hast thou a wife? Thou must consider how thou oughtest to behave thyself under that relation: and to do this aright, thou must consider the condition of thy wife, whether she be one that indeed believeth or not.

First, If she believeth, then,

1. Thou art engaged to bless God for her: "For her price is far above rubies" (Pro 31:10), and she is the gift of God unto thee, and is for thy adorning and glory (Pro 12:4; 1Co 11:7). "Favour is deceitful, and beauty

is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" (Pro 31:30).

2. Thou oughtest to love her, under a double consideration: (1.) As she is thy flesh and thy bone: "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Eph 5:29). (2.) As she is together with thee an heir of the grace of life (1Pe 3:7). This, I say, should engage thee to love her with Christian love; to love her as believing you both are dearly beloved of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and as those that must be together with Him in eternal happiness.

3. Thou oughtest so to carry thyself to and before her, as doth Christ to and before His Church. As saith the apostle, so ought men to love their wives "even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph 5:25). When husbands behave themselves like husbands indeed, then will they be not only husbands, but such an ordinance of God to the wife, as will preach to her the carriage of Christ to His spouse. There is a sweet scent wrapped up in the relations of husbands and wives that believe (Eph 4:32); the wife, I say, signifying the Church, and the husband the head and saviour thereof. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body" (Eph 5:23).

This is one of God's chief ends in instituting marriage, that Christ and His Church, under a figure, might be wherever there is a couple that believe through grace. Wherefore that husband that carrieth it undiscreetly towards his wife, he doth not only behave himself contrary to the rule, but also maketh his wife lose the benefit of such an ordinance, and crosseth the mystery of his relation.

Therefore I say, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:" (Eph 5:28-29). Christ laid out His life for His Church, covereth her infirmities, communicates to her His wisdom, protecteth her, and helpeth her in her employments in this world; and so ought men to do for their wives. Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter had the art of thus doing, as you may see in the book of Canticles. Wherefore bear with their weaknesses, help their infirmities, and honour them as the weaker vessels, and as being of a frailer constitution (1Pe 3:7).

In a word, be such a husband to thy believing wife that she may say, God hath not only given me a husband, but such a husband as preacheth to

me every day the carriage of Christ to His Church.

Second, If thy wife be unbelieving or carnal, then thou hast also a duty lying before thee, which thou art engaged to perform under a double engagement,

1. For that she lieth liable every moment to eternal damnation.

2. That she is thy wife that is in this evil case.

Oh! How little sense of the worth of souls is there in the heart of some husbands, as is manifest by their unchristian carriage to and before their wives! Now, to qualify thee for a carriage suitable,

1. Labour seriously after a sense of her miserable state, that thy bowels may yearn towards her soul.

2. Beware that she take no occasion from any unseemly carriage of thine to proceed in evil. And here thou hast need to double thy diligence, for she lieth in thy bosom, and therefore is capable of espying the least miscarriage in thee.

3. If she behave herself unseemly and unruly, as she is subject to do, being Christless and graceless, then labour thou to overcome her evil with thy goodness, her forwardness with thy patience and meekness. It is a shame for thee, who hast another principle, to do as she.

4. Take fit opportunities to convince her. Observe her disposition, and when she is most likely to bear, then speak to her very heart.

5. When thou speakest, speak to purpose. It is no matter for many words, provided they be pertinent. Job in a few words answers his wife, and takes her off from her foolish talking: "Thou speakest," saith he, "as one of the foolish women speakth. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10).

6. Let all be done without rancour, or the least appearance of anger: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if… peradventure…
they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2Ti 2:25-26). "How knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife" (1Co 7:16).

Duty of Parents to Children

If thou are a parent, a father, or a mother, then thou art to consider thy calling under this relation.

Thy children have souls, and they must be begotten of God as well as of thee, or they perish. And know also, that unless thou be very

circumspect in thy behavior to and before them, they may perish through thee: the thoughts of which should provoke thee, both to *instruct,* and also to *correct* them.

First, To *instruct* them as the Scripture saith, and to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"; and to do this diligently, "when thou sittest in thine house—when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Eph 6:4; Deu 6:7).

Now to do this to purpose:

1. Do it in terms and words easy to be understood. Affect not high expressions; they will drown your children. Thus God spake to His children, and Paul to his (Hos 12:10; 1Co 3:2).

2. Take heed of filling their heads with whimsies, and unprofitable notions, for this will sooner learn them to be malapert[23] and proud, than sober and humble. Open therefore to them the state of man by nature. Discourse with them of sin, of death, and hell; of a crucified Saviour, and the promise of life through faith, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Pro 22:6).

3. There must be much gentleness and patience in all thy instructions, "lest they be discouraged" (Col. 3:21). And,

4. Labour to convince them by a conversation answerable that the things of which thou instructest them are not fables, but realities; yea, and realities so far above what can be here enjoyed, that all things, were they a thousand times better than they are, are not worthy to be compared with the glory and worthiness of these things.[24]

Isaac was so holy before his children that when Jacob remembered God, he remembered that he was 'the Fear of his father Isaac' (Gen 31:53).

Ah! When children can think of their parents and bless God for that instruction and good they have received from them, this is not only profitable for children, but honourable, and comfortable to parents: "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him" (Pro 23:24; see vs. 25).

Second, The duty of *correction.*

1. See if fair words will win them from evil. This is God's way with His children (Jer 25:4-5).

2. Let those words you speak to them in your reproof be both sober, few, and pertinent, adding always some suitable sentence of the Scripture

therewith: as, if they lie, then such as Revelation 21:8, 27; if they refuse to hear the Word, such as 2 Chronicles 25:14-16.

3. Look to them, that they be not companions with those that are rude and ungodly; showing with soberness a continual dislike of their naughtiness; often crying out to them, as God did of old unto His, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate" (Jer 44:4).

4. Let all this be mixed with such love, pity, and compunction of spirit, that if possible they may be convinced you dislike not their persons, but their sins. This is God's way (Psa 99:8).

5. Be often endeavouring to fasten on their consciences the day of their death, and judgment to come. Thus also God deals with His (Deu 32:29).

6. If thou art driven to the rod, then strike advisedly in cool blood, and soberly show them, (1.) their fault; (2.) how much it is against thy heart thus to deal with them; (3.) and that what thou dost, thou dost in conscience to God, and love to their souls; (4.) and tell them, that if fair means would have done, none of this severity should have been. This, I have proved it, will be a means to afflict their hearts as well as their bodies; and it being the way that God deals with His, it is the most likely to accomplish its end.

7. Follow all this with prayer to God for them, and leave the issue to Him. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Pro 22:15).

Lastly, Observe these *cautions,*

1. Take heed that the misdeeds for which thou correctest thy children be not learned them by thee. Many children learn that wickedness of their parents for which they beat and chastise them.

2. Take heed thou smile not upon them, to encourage them in small faults, lest that thy carriage to them be an encouragement to them to commit greater.

3. Take heed thou use not unsavoury and unseemly words in thy chastising of them, as railing, miscalling, and the like; this is devilish.

4. Take heed thou do not use them to many chiding words and threatenings, mixed with lightness and laughter; this will harden. Speak not much, nor often, but pertinent to them with all gravity.[25]

Duties of Masters to Servants

Masters also have a work to do as they stand related to their servants. And,

First, If possibly they can, to get them that fear God. "He that worketh deceit," saith David, "shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight" (Psa 101:7).

Second, But if none at the present but unbelievers can be got to do thy labour, then,

1. Know that it is thy duty so to behave thyself to thy servant that thy service may not only be for thy good, but for the good of thy servant, and that both in body and soul. Wherefore deal with him, as to admonition, as with thy children. Given him the same bread of God thou givest to them, and who knows but that if thou with spiritual delicates bringest up thy servant, but he may become thy spiritual son in the end (Pro 29:21).

2. Take heed thou do not turn thy servants into slaves by overcharging them in thy work through thy greediness. To make men serve with rigour is more like to Israel's enemies than Christian masters (Exo 1:14).[26]

3. Take heed thou carry not thyself to thy servant as he of whom it is said, "He is such a son of Belial, that his servants could not speak to him." (1Sa 25:17).

And the apostle bids you forbear to threaten them because you also have a Master in heaven (Eph 6:9). As who should say your servants cannot be guilty of so many miscarriages against you as you are guilty of against Christ. Wherefore do with, and to your servants, as you would have your Master do with you.

4. Take heed that thou neither circumvent him at his coming in to thy service, nor at his going out.

Servants, at their going into service, may be beguiled [27] two ways.

(1.) By their masters lying unto them, saying their work is so small and so easy, when it is indeed if not too burdensome, yet far beyond what at first was said of it. This is beguiling of them.

(2.) The other way is when masters greedily seek to wire-draw [28] their servants to such wages as indeed is too little and inconsiderable for such work and labour. Both these the apostle opposeth where he saith, "Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just," just labour, and just wages,
"knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven" (Col 4:1).

As servants may be circumvented at their coming into their labour, so also they may be at their going out: which is done by masters that either change their wages, like heathenish Laban (Gen 31:7), or by keeping it back, like those against whom God will be a swift witness (Mal 3:5).

5. Take heed that thou make not a gain of thy place, because thou art gracious, or livest conveniently for the means of grace.[29]

Servants that are truly godly, they care not how cheap they serve their masters, provided they may get into godly families, or where they may be convenient for the Word. But now if a master or mistress should take this opportunity to make a prey of their servants, this is abominable; this is making a gain of godliness, and merchandise of the things of God, and of the soul of thy brother (1Ti 6:5).

I have heard some poor servants say that in some carnal families they have had more liberty to God's things, and more fairness of dealing, than among professors. But this stinketh. And as Jacob said concerning the cruelty of his two sons, so may I say of such masters, they make religion stink before the inhabitants of the land (Gen 34:30).

In a word, learn of the Lord Jesus to carry yourselves well to your servants, that your servants also may learn something of the kindness of Christ by your deportment to them. Servants are goers as well as comers; take heed that thou give them no occasion to scandal the Gospel when they are gone for what they observed thee unrighteously to do when they were with thee. Then masters carry it rightly toward their servants, when they labour both in word and life to convince them that the things of God are the one thing necessary. That which servants are commanded to do, touching their fear, their singleness of heart, their doing what they do as to the Lord, and not to men; the master is commanded to do the same things unto them. (Eph 6:6-9).

Duties of Wives.

But passing the master of the family, I shall speak a word or two to those that are under him.

And, first, to the wife: the wife is bound by the Law to her husband, so long as her husband liveth (Rom 7:2). Wherefore she also hath her work and place in the family, as well as the rest.

Now there are these things considerable in the carriage of a wife toward her husband, which she ought conscientiously to observe.

First, That she look upon him as her head and lord. "The head of the woman is the man" (1Co 11:3). And so Sarah called Abraham lord (1Pe 3:6).

Second, She should therefore be subject to him, as is fit in the Lord. The apostle saith that the wife should submit herself to her husband, as to the Lord [30] (1Pe 3:1; Col 3:18; Eph 5:22). I told you before, that if the husband doth walk towards his wife as becomes him, he will therein be such an ordinance of God to her, besides the relation of a husband, that shall preach to her the carriage of Christ to His Church. And now I say also, that the wife, if she walk with her husband as becomes her, she shall preach the obedience of the Church to her husband. "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Eph 5:24). Now for thy performing of this work, thou must first shun these evils.

1. The evil of a wandering and a gossiping spirit; this is evil in the Church, and is evil also in a wife, who is the figure of a Church. Christ loveth to have His spouse keep at home; that is, to be with Him in the faith and practice of His things, not ranging and meddling with the things of Satan; no more should wives be given to wander and gossip abroad. You know that Proverbs 7:11 saith, "She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house." Wives should be about their own husbands' business at home. As the apostle saith, Let them "be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands" (Ti 2:5). And why? Because otherwise the Word of God will be blasphemed.

2. Take heed of an idle, talking, or brangling [31] tongue. This also is odious,[32] either in maids or wives, to be like parrots, not bridling their tongue. Whereas the wife should know, as I said before, that her husband is her lord, and is over her, as Christ is over the Church. Do you think it is seemly for the Church to *parrot* it against her Husband? Is she not to be silent before Him, and to look to His laws, rather than her own fictions? Why so, saith the apostle, ought the wife to carry it towards her husband? "Let the woman," saith Paul, "learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1Ti 2:11-12). It is an unseemly thing to see a woman so much as once in all her lifetime to offer to overtop her husband; she ought in

everything to be in subjection to him, and to do all she doth, as having her warrant, license, and authority from him. And indeed here is her glory, even to be under him, as the Church is under Christ: Now "she openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Pro 31:26).

3. Take heed of affecting immodest apparel, or a wanton gait; this will be evil both abroad and at home; abroad, it will not only give ill example, but also tend to tempt to lust and lasciviousness; and at home it will give an offence to a godly husband, and be cankering [33] to ungodly children, and so forth. Wherefore, as saith the apostle, let women's apparel be modest, as becometh women professing godliness, "with good works," "not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (1Ti 2:9-10). And as it is said again, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands" (1Pe 3:3-5).

But yet, do not think that by the subjection I have here mentioned that I do intend women should be their husbands' slaves. Women are their husbands' yokefellows,[34] their flesh and their bones; and he is not a man that hateth his own flesh, or that is bitter against it (Eph 5:29). Wherefore, let every man "love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Eph 5:33). The wife is master next her husband, and is to rule all in his absence; [35] yea, in his presence she is to guide the house, to bring up the children, provided she so do it as the adversary have no occasion to speak reproachfully (1Ti 5:10, 13). "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." "A gracious woman retaineth honour:" and guideth her affairs with discretion (Pro 31:10; 11:16; 12:4).

Objection-

But my husband is an unbeliever; what shall I do?

Answer-

If so, then what I have said before lieth upon thee with an engagement so much the stronger. For, 1. Thy husband being in this condition, he will be watchful to take thy slips and infirmities, to throw them as dirt in the face of God and thy Saviour. 2. He will be apt to make the worst of every

one of thy words, carriages, and gestures. 3. And all this doth tend to the possessing his heart with more hardness, prejudice, and opposition to his own salvation; wherefore, as Peter saith, “ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear” (1Pe 3:1-2). Thy husband’s salvation or damnation lieth much in thy deportment and behaviour before him. Wherefore, if there be in thee any fear of God, or love to thy husband, seek, by a carriage full of meekness, modesty, and holiness, and a humble behaviour before him, to win him to the love of his own salvation. And by thus doing, how “knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?” (1Co 7:16).

Objection-

But my husband is not only an unbeliever, but one very froward,[36] peevish, and testy, yea, so froward and so forth, that I know not how to speak to him, or behave myself before him.

Answer-

Indeed there are some wives in great slavery by reason of their ungodly husbands, and as such should be pitied, and prayed for; so they should be so much the more watchful and circumspect in all their ways.

1. Therefore be thou very faithful to him in all the things of this life.

2. Bear with patience his unruly and unconverted behaviour; thou art alive, he is dead; thou art principled with grace, he with sin. Now, then, seeing grace is stronger than sin, and virtue than vice; be not overcome with his vileness, but overcome that with thy virtues (Rom 12:21). It is a shame for those that are gracious to be as lavishing in their words and so forth as those that are graceless. “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly” (Pro 14:29).

3. Thy wisdom, therefore, if at any time thou hast a desire to speak to thy husband for his conviction, concerning anything, either good or evil, it is to observe convenient times and seasons. There is “a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Ecc 3:7). Now for the right timing thy intentions,

(1.) Consider his disposition, and take him when he is farthest off of those filthy passions that are thy afflictions. Abigail would not speak a word to her churlish[37] husband till his wine was gone from him, and he

in a sober temper (1Sa 25:36-37). The want of this observation is the cause why so much is spoken, and so little effected.

(2.) Take him at those times when he hath his heart taken with thee, and when he showeth tokens of love and delight in thee. Thus did Esther with the king her husband, and prevailed (Est 5:3, 6; 7:1-2).

(3.) Observe when convictions seize his conscience, and then follow them with sound and grave sayings of the Scriptures. Somewhat like to this dealt Manoah's wife with her husband (Jud 13:22-23). Yet then,

(a) Let thy words be few.

(b) And none of them savouring of a lording it over him; but speak thou still as to thy head and lord, by way of entreaty and beseeching.

(c) And that in such a spirit of sympathy, and bowels of affection after his good, that the manner of thy speech and behaviour in speaking may be to him an argument that thou speakest in love, as being sensible of his misery, and inflamed in thy soul with desire after his conversion.

(d) And follow thy words and behaviour with prayers to God for his soul.

(e) Still keeping thyself in a holy, chaste, and modest behaviour before him.

Objection-

But my husband is a sot, a fool, and one that hath not wit enough to follow his outward employment in the world.

Answer-

1. Though all this be true, yet thou must know he is thy head, thy lord, and thy husband.

2. Therefore thou must take heed of desiring to usurp authority over him. He was not made for thee; that is, for thee to have dominion over him, but to be thy husband, and to rule over thee (1Ti 2:12; 1Co 11:3, 8).

3. Wherefore, though in truth thou mayest have more discretion than he, yet thou oughtest to know that thou, with all that is thine, is to be used as under thy husband; even "every thing" (Eph 5:24).

Take heed therefore, that what thou dost goes not in thy name, but his; not to thy exaltation, but his; carrying all things so, by thy dexterity and prudence, that not one of thy husband's weaknesses be discovered to others by thee: 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.' For then, as the wise man sayeth,

“she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life” (Pro 12:4; 31:12).

4. Therefore act, and do still, as being under the power and authority of thy husband.

Now touching thy carriage to thy children and servants. Thou art a parent, and a mistress, and so thou oughtest to demean thyself. And besides, seeing the believing woman is a figure of the Church, she ought as the Church, to nourish and instruct her children and servants as the Church, that she may answer in that particular also; and truly, the wife being always at home, she hath great advantage that way. Wherefore do it, and the Lord prosper your proceeding.

Duties of Children to Parents

There lieth also a duty upon children to their parents which they are bound both by the Law of God and nature conscientiously to observe: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right;” and again, “Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20).

There are these general things in which children should show forth that honour that is due to their parents from them.

First, They should always count them better than themselves. I observe a vile spirit among some children, and that is, they are apt to look over their parents, and to have slighting and scornful thoughts of them. This is worse than heathenish; such an one hath got just the heart of a dog or a beast, that will bite those that begot them, and her that brought them forth.

Objection-

But my father is now poor, and I am rich, and it will be a disparagement, or at least a hinderance to me, to show that respect to him as otherwise I might.

Answer-

I tell thee thou arguest like an atheist and a beast, and standest in this full flat against the Son of God (Mar 7:9-13). Must a gift, and a little of the glory of the butterfly, make thee that thou shalt not do for and honour to thy father and mother? “A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother” (Pro 15:20). Though thy parents be never so

low, and thou thyself never so high, yet he is thy father, and she thy mother, and they must be in thy eye in great esteem. “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it” (Pro 30:17).

Second, Thou oughtest to show thy honour to thy parents by a willingness to help them with such necessaries and accommodations which they need. “If any…have children or nephews, let them learn to show piety [38]at home, and to requite [39] their parents,” saith Paul, “for that is good and acceptable before God” (1Ti 5:4). And this rule Joseph observed to his poor father, though he himself was next the king in Egypt (Gen 47:12; 41:39-44).

But mark, let them “requite their parents.” There are three things for which, as long as thou livest, thou wilt be a debtor to thy parents.

1. For thy being in this world. They are they from whom, immediately under God, thou didst receive it.

2. For their care to preserve thee when thou wast helpless, and couldst neither care for nor regard thyself.

3. For the pains they have taken with thee to bring thee up. Until thou hast children of thy own, thou wilt not be sensible of the pains, watchings, fears, sorrow, and affliction that they have gone under to bring thee up; and when thou knowest it, thou wilt not easily yield that thou has recompensed them for thy favour to thee. How often have they sustained [thee in] thy hunger, clothed thy nakedness? What care have they taken that thou mightest have wherewith to live and do well when they were dead and gone? They possibly have spared it from their own belly and back for thee, and have also impoverished themselves that thou mightest live like a man.[40] All these things ought duly, and like a man, to be considered by thee; and care ought to be taken on thy part to requite them. The Scripture saith so, reason saith so, and there be none but dogs and beasts that deny it. It is the duty of parents to lay up for their children; and the duty of children to requite their parents.

Third, Therefore show, by all humble and son-like carriage, that thou dost to this day, with thy heart, remember the love of thy parents. Thus much for obedience to parents in general.

Again, if thy parents be godly, and thou wicked, as thou art if thou hast not a second work or birth from God upon thee, then thou art to consider that thou art more strongly engaged to respect and honour thy

parents, not now only as a father in the flesh, but as godly parents. Thy father and mother are now made of God thy teachers and instructors in the way of righteousness. Wherefore, to allude to that of Solomon, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck" (Pro 6:20-21).

Now, to provoke thee hereto, consider,

1. That this hath been the practice always of those that are and have been obedient children; yea, of Christ Himself to Joseph and Mary, though He Himself was God blessed for ever (Luk 2:51).

2. Thou hast also the severe judgments of God upon those that have been disobedient, to awe thee. As (1.) Ishmael, for but mocking at one good carriage of his father and mother was both thrust out of his father's inheritance and the kingdom of heaven, and that with God's approbation (Gen 21:9-14; Gal 4:30). (2.) Hophni and Phinehas, for refusing the good counsel of their father, provoked the great God to be their enemy: "They hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them" (1Sa 2:25). (3.) Absalom was hanged, as I may say, by God Himself, for rebelling against his father (2Sa 18:9).

Besides, little dost thou know how heart-aching a consideration it is to thy parents, when they do but *suppose* thou mayest be damned! How many prayers, sighs, and tears are there wrung from their hearts upon this account? Every miscarriage of thine goeth to their heart, for fear God should take an occasion thereat to shut thee up in hardness for ever. How did Abraham groan for Ishmael? "O," saith he to God, "that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen 17:18). How were Isaac and Rebecca grieved for the miscarriage of Esau? (Gen 26:34-35). And how bitterly did David mourn for his son, who died in his wickedness? (2Sa 18:32-33).

Lastly, And can any imagine but that all these carriages of thy godly parents will be to thee the increase of thy torments in hell if thou die in thy sins notwithstanding?

Again, if thy parents and thou also be godly, how happy a thing is this? How shouldest thou rejoice, that the same faith should dwell both in thy parents and thee? Thy conversion, possibly, is the fruits of thy parents' groans and prayers for thy soul, and they cannot choose but rejoice; do thou rejoice with them. It is true in the salvation of a natural son which is mentioned in the parable: "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he

was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luk 15:24). Let therefore the consideration of this, that thy parents have grace as well as thee, engage thy heart so much the more to honour, reverence, and obey them.

Thou art better able now to consider the pains and care that thy friends have been at, both for thy body and soul; wherefore strive to requite them. Thou hast strength to answer in some measure the command: wherefore do not neglect it. It is a double sin in a gracious son not to remember the commandment, yea, the first commandment with promise (Eph 6:1-2). Take heed of giving thy sweet parents one snappish word, or one unseemly carriage. Love them because they are thy parents, because they are godly, and because thou must be in glory with them.

Again, if thou be godly, and thy parents wicked, as often it sadly falls out; then,

1. Let thy bowels yearn towards them; it is thy parents that are going to hell!

2. As I said before to the wife, touching her unbelieving husband, so now I say to thee, Take heed of a parroting tongue: speak to them wisely, meekly, and humbly. Do for them faithfully without repining;[41] and bear with all child-like modesty their reproaches, their railing, and evil speaking. Watch fit opportunities to lay their condition before them. O! How happy a thing would it be if God should use a child to beget his father to the faith! Then indeed might the father say, With the fruit of my own bowels hath God converted my soul. The Lord, if it be His will, convert our poor parents, that they with us may be the children of God.[42]

Duties of Servants

Servants also: they have a work to do for God, in their place and station among men.

The apostles assert masters under a threefold consideration. *First,* the believing master. *Second,* the unbelieving master. *Third,* the froward master.

For all which, servants are furnished with counsel and advice in the Word for the demeaning of themselves under each of them.

But before I speak in particular to any of these*, I will in general show you the duty of servants.*

1. Thou art to look upon thyself as thou art, that is, as a servant, not a child, nor a wife; thou art inferior to these. Wherefore count thyself under them and be content with that station. “For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear.” One is “a servant when he reigneth” (Pro 30:21-22). It is out of thy place either to talk or do as one that reigneth.

2. Consider, that thou being a servant, what is under thy hand is not thy own but thy master’s. Now, because it is not thy own thou oughtest not to dispose of it; but because it is thy master’s, thou oughtest to be faithful. Thus it was with Joseph (Gen 39:8-9). But if thou do otherwise, know that thou shalt receive of God for the wrong that thou dost; and there is with God “no respect of persons” (Col 3:25). Wherefore,

3. Touching thy work and employment, thou art to do it as unto the Lord, and not for man. And, indeed, then servants do their business as becomes them when they do all in obedience to the Lord; as knowing that the place in which they now are, it is the place where Christ hath put them, and in which He expecteth they should be faithful. “Servants,” saith Paul, “be obedient to them that are your masters…with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eye-service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph 6:5-6).

Observe a little the Word of God to servants. 1. Servants must be obedient, yet, 2. Not with that obedience that will serve man only. Servants must have their eye on the Lord in the work they do for their masters. 3. That their work in this service is the will and ordinance of God. From which I conclude, that thy work in thy place and station, as thou art a servant, is as really God’s ordinance, and as acceptable to Him, in its kind, as is preaching, or any other work for God; and that thou art as sure to receive a reward for thy labour as he that hangs or is burnt for the Gospel.

Wherefore, saith the apostle to servants, “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col 3:23-24).

And now touching the *three sorts of masters mentioned before.*

First, For the believing master, saith Paul, “They that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved”, and partakers,

with the servants, “of the [heavenly] benefit” (1Ti 6:2). Servants, if they have not a care of their hearts, will be so much in the consideration of the relation that is betwixt their masters and them as brethren that they will forget the relation that is between them as masters and servants. Now, though they ought to remember the one, yet let them take heed of forgetting the other. Know thy place, as a servant, while thou considerest that thy master and thee are brethren, and do thy work for him faithfully, humbly, and with meekness, because he is a master faithful and beloved, and partaker of the heavenly benefit. “If any man teach otherwise,” saith the apostle Paul, “and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself ” (1Ti 6:3-5).

Second, For the *unbelieving* masters, for of them Paul speaks in the first verse of the 6th of Timothy, “Let as many servants,” saith he, “as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.” Servants living with unbelieving masters are greatly engaged to be both watchful, faithful, and trusty. Engaged, I say, 1. From the consideration of the condition of their master, for he being unbelieving will have an evil eye upon thee, and upon thy doings, and so much the more because thou professest, as in the case of Saul and David (1Sa 18:8-9). 2. Thou art engaged because of the profession thou makest of the Word of God; for by thy profession thou dost lay both God and His Word before thy master, and he hath no other wit but to blaspheme them if thou behave thyself unworthily. Wherefore Paul bids Titus “exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;” not giving parroting answers, or such as are cross or provoking, “Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Ti 2:9-10). That servant who in an unbeliever’s family doth his work before God as God’s ordinance, he shall adorn the doctrine of God if not save his master by so doing; but if he doth otherwise, he shall both stumble the unbeliever, dishonour God, offend the faithful, and bring guilt upon his own soul.

Third, For the *froward* master, though I distinguish him from the unbeliever, yet it is not because he may not be such, but because every unbeliever doth not properly go under that name. Now with this froward and peevish fellow, thou art to serve as faithfully for the time thou standest bound as with the most pleasant and rational master in the world. "Servants," saith Peter, "be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1Pe 2:18). And if thy peevish master will still be froward, either out of spite to thy religion, or because he is without reason concerning thy labour—thou to the utmost of thy power labouring faithfully—God then reckoneth thee a sufferer for well-doing, as truly as if thou wert called upon the stage of this world before men for the matters of thy faith. Wherefore Peter adds this encouragement to servants to the exhortation he gave them before: "This is thankworthy," saith he, "if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (1Pe 2:19-20). Wherefore be comforted concerning thy condition, with considering that God looks upon thee as on Jacob in the family of Laban; and will right all thy wrongs, and recompense thee for thy faithful, wise, and godly behaviour before and in the service of thy froward master. Wherefore, be patient, I say, and abound in faithfulness in thy place and calling, till God make a way for thy escape from this place; and when thou mayest be made free, use it rather (1Co 7:21).

Duties of Neighbours Each to Other.

Having thus in few words showed you what is duty under your several relations, I shall now at last speak, in a word or two, touching good neighbourhood,[43] and then draw towards a conclusion. Touching neighbourhood, there are these things to be considered and practiced if thou wilt be found in the practical part of good neighbourhood.

First, Thou must be of a good and sound conversation in thy own family, place, and station, showing to all the power that the Gospel and the things of another world hath in thy heart, "That ye may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phi 2:15).

Second, As persons must be of good behavior at home that will be good neighbours, so they must be full of courtesy and charity to them that have need about them (Luk 10:36-37). Right good neighbourhood is for men readily to communicate, as of their spirituals, so of their temporalities, as food, raiment, and help to those that have need; to be giving to the poor as thou seest them go by thee, or to inquire after their condition, and according to thy capacity to send unto them (Job 31:15-17).

Third, Thou must be always humble and meek among them, as also grave and gracious; not light and frothy, but by thy words and carriage ministering "grace to the hearers" (Eph 4:29). Thus also Job honoured God among his neighbours (Job 29:6-12).

Fourth, Thy wisdom will be rightly to discountenance sin, and to reprove thy neighbour for the same (Lev 19:17); denying thyself in some things, for the preventing an injury to thy neighbour, that thou mayest please him for his edification (Rom 15:2).

Fifth, If thou wouldest be a good neighbour, take heed of thy tongue upon two accounts.

1. That thou with it give no offensive language to thy neighbour to the provoking of him to anger. Bear much, put up wrongs, and say little. "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling" (Pro 20:3). And again, "He loveth transgression that loveth strife" (Pro 17:19).

2. And as thou shouldest take heed that thou be not the original of contention and anger, so also take heed that thou be not an instrument to beget it between parties, by tale-bearing and a gossiping spirit: "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears…As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife" (Pro 26:17, 21). I do observe two things very odious in many professors: the one is a head-strong and stiff-necked spirit that will have its own way; and the other is a great deal of tattling and talk about religion and but a very little, if anything, of those Christian deeds that carry in them the cross of a Christian in the doing thereof, and profit to my neighbour.

(1.) When I say a head-strong and stiff-necked spirit, I mean they are for pleasing themselves and their own fancies in things of no weight, though their so doing be as the very slaughter-knife to the weak conscience of a brother or neighbour. Now this is base. A Christian in all

such things as intrench not the matters of faith and worship should be full of self-denial, and seek to please others rather than themselves; "Give none offence—to the Jews, nor to the Greeks,[44] nor to the church of God…not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved" (1Co 10:32-33).

(2.) And the second is as bad, to wit, when professors are great prattlers and talkers, and disputers, but do little of anything that bespeaketh love to the poor, or self-denial in outward things. Some people think religion is made up of words—a very wide mistake! Words without deeds is but a half-faced religion: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jam 1:27). Again, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," which are very fine words, yet if you "give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (Jam 2:15-16).

Sins which Spoil Christian Brotherhood and Civil Neighbourhood.

Now then, before I go any farther, I will here take an occasion to touch a little upon those sins that are so rife in many professors in this day: and they are, covetousness, pride, and uncleanness. I would speak a word to them in this place, the rather because they are they which spoil both Christian brotherhood, and civil neighbourhood, in too great a measure.

First, of *Covetousness*.

1. Covetousness: it is all one with desire; he that desires, covets, whether the thing he desires be evil or good. Wherefore that which is called coveting in Exodus 20:17 is called desire in Deuteronomy 5:21. As the apostle also saith, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom 7:7). That is, I had not known lust to be a sin, unless the law had forbid it. Wherefore, though lawful desires are good (1Co 12:31), and to be commended, yet covetousness, as commonly understood, is to be fled from, and abhorred, as of the devil.

2. Covetousness, or evil desire: it is the first mover, and giveth to every sin its call, as I may say, both to move and act. As was said before,

the apostle had not known sin, except the law had said, Thou shalt not desire or covet; for where there is no desire to sin, there appears no sin.

3. Therefore covetousness carrieth in it every sin—we speak of sins against the second table—even as a serpent carrieth her young ones in her belly. This the Scripture affirms, where it saith, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's" (Exo 20:17). Covetousness will meddle with anything.

Now, there are in my mind at present these eight notes of covetousness, which hinder good works, and a Christian conversation among men, wherever they are harboured.

(1.) When men to whom God hath given a comfortable livelihood are yet not content therewith. This is against the apostle where he saith, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5).

(2.) It is covetousness in the seller that puts him to say of his traffic, it is better than it is, that he may heighten the price of it; and covetousness in the buyer that prompts him to say worse of a thing than he thinks in his conscience it is, and that for an abatement of a reasonable price. This is that which the apostle forbids under the name of *defraud* (1Co 6:8), and that which Solomon condemns (Pro 20:14).

(3.) It is through covetousness that men think much of that which goeth beside their own mouth, though possibly it goeth to those that have more need than themselves, and also that better deserve it than they.

(4.) It argueth covetousness when men will deprive themselves and those under them of the privileges of the Gospel for more of this world, and is condemned by Christ (Luk 14:18-20).

(5.) It argueth covetousness when men that have it can go by, or hear of the poor, and shut up their bowels and compassions from them (1Joh 3:17).

(6.) Also when men are convinced it is their duty to communicate[45] to such and such that have need, yet they defer it; and if not quite forget it, yet linger away the time as being loth[46] to distribute to the necessities of those in want. This is forbidden by the Holy Ghost: "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it" (Pro 3:27). Now, it is due from thee to the poor by the commandment of

God if they want and thou hast it. “Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee” (Pro 3: 28).

(7.) It argueth a greedy mind also when, after men have cast in their minds what to give, they then from that will be pinching and clipping, and taking away; whereas the Holy Ghost saith, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give*;* not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2Co 9:7).

(8.) And lastly, It argueth a filthy greedy heart also when a man, after he hath done any good, then in his heart to repent and secretly wish that he had not so done, or at least, that he had not done so much: this is to be weary of well-doing; (I speak now of communicating,) and carrieth in it two evils. First, it spoileth the work done. And, secondly, it, if entertained, spoileth the heart for doing any more so. “The vile person shall be no more called liberal,[47] nor the churl[48] said to be bountiful,” for “the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand” (Isa 32:5, 8).

Now then, to dissuade all from this poisonous sin, observe that above all sins in the New Testament, this is called idolatry (Eph 5:5; Col 3:5). And therefore God’s people should be so far from being taken with it that they should be much afraid of the naming of it one among another, lest it should, as adulterous thoughts, infect the heart by the talking of it (Eph 5:3).

Question-

But why is covetousness called idolatry?

Answer-

1. Because it engageth the very heart of man in it to mind earthly things. It gets our love, which should be set on God, and sets it upon poor empty creatures. It puts our affections out of heaven, where they should be, and sets them on earth, where they should not be (Eze 33:31; Phi 3:18-19; Col 3:1-3). Thus it changeth the object on which the heart should be set and setteth it on that on which it should not. It makes a man forsake God, “the fountain of living waters,” and causeth him to hew to himself “cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jer 2:13). For,

2. It rejecteth the care, government, and providence of God towards us, and causeth us to make of our care and industry a god to whom, instead of God, we fly continually, both for the keeping what we have and for getting more. This was Israel’s idolatry of old, and the original of all her

idolatrous practices. “For their mother hath played the harlot,” that is, committed idolatry: “she that conceived them hath done shamefully; for she said, I will go after my lovers, that gave me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink” (Hos 2:5).

3. It disalloweth of God’s way of disposing His creatures, and would have them ordered and disposed of otherwise than His heavenly wisdom seemeth meet; and hence ariseth all discontents about God’s dealing with us. Covetousness never yet said, It is the Lord; let him do what he pleaseth; but is ever objecting, like a god, against everything that goeth against it. And it is that which, like a god, draweth away the heart and soul from the true God and His Son Jesus Christ. “He went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (Mat 19:22). Now then, that which engageth the heart, that rejecteth the providence of God, and that is for ordering and disposing of things contrary to God, and for breaking with God upon these terms, is idolatry; and all these do covetousness. “The wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth” (Psa 10:3). Now the way to remedy this disease is to learn the lesson which Paul had got by heart, to wit, “In whatsoever state” you are, “therewith to be content” (Phi 4:11).

Second, of *Pride*

I come in the second place to speak a word of pride, and loftiness of heart and life.

1. Pride, in general, it is that which causeth a man to think of man and his things above what is written (1Cor 4:6).

2. It hath its seat in the heart among these enormities: fornications, adulteries, lasciviousness, murders, deceit, and so forth (Mar 7:21-23), and showeth itself in these following particulars.

(1.) When you slight this or that person, though gracious—that is, look over them and shun them for their poverty in this world—and choose rather to have converse with others that possibly are less gracious because of their greatness in this world. This the Apostle James writes against (Jam 2:1-3), under the name of partiality; for indeed the fruits of a puffed-up heart is to deal in this manner with Christians (1Co 4:6-7). Now this branch of pride floweth from ignorance of the vanity of the creature and of the worth of a gracious heart. Wherefore get more of the knowledge of these two, and this sprig will be nipped in the head, and you will learn to condescend to men of low degree (Rom 12:16).

(2.) It argues pride of heart when men will not deny themselves in things that they may for the good and profit of their neighbours. And it argueth now that pride has got so much up into self-love and self-pleasing that they little care who they grieve or offend, so they may have their way (Oba 12-15).

(3.) It argueth pride of heart when sober reproofs for sin and unbeseeming carriages will not down with thee, but that rather thou snuffest, and givest way to thy spirit to be peevish, and to retain prejudice against those that thus reprove thee. Saith the prophet, "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken"; that is, hear the reproofs of God for your sins, and break them off by repentance—"But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for your pride" (Jer 13:15, 17). So also in Hosea: "They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not know the LORD. And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face" (Hos 5:4-5). This argueth great senselessness of God, and a heart greatly out of frame.

(4.) It argueth pride also, when a reproof or admonition will not down as well from the poorest saint as from the greatest doctor; and it argueth a glory in men (1Co 3:21), and that they would that their faith should stand in their wisdom and not in the "power of God," that is, of naked truth (1Co 2:5).

(5.) It argueth pride of heart when a man that hath this or that in his heart to do in reference to God, but yet will slight a sober asking counsel and direction of God in this matter: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God," saith David (Psa 10:4).

(6.) It argueth pride of heart when persons are tickled with thoughts of their own praise, that secretly lust after it, that think of themselves and others above what is written; which those do who do not acknowledge that man in his best estate is altogether vanity. But such kind of people have forgot the exhortation, "Be not highminded, but fear" (Rom 11:20). And also, that there is a knowledge that puffeth up, and edifieth neither themselves nor others (1Co 8:1-2). Wherefore, to such the apostle saith, Be not "desirous of vain-glory," "but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Gal 5:26; Phi 2:3).

Pride also there is in outward carriage, behaviour, and gesture, which is odious for Christians to be tainted with; and this pride is discovered by mincing[49] words, a made carriage,[50] and an affecting[51] the toys and

baubles that Satan and every lightheaded fool bringeth into the world. As God speaketh of the daughters of Zion, they "walk with stretched forth necks, and wanton[52] eyes…mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet" (Isa 3:16). A very unhandsome carriage for a people that profess godliness, and that use to come before God to confess their sins, and to bemoan themselves for what they have done. How can a sense of thy own baseness, of the vileness of thy heart, and of the holiness of God, stand with such a carriage? Dost thou see the vileness of thy heart, the fruit of sin? And art thou afflicted with that disagreement that is between God and thy heart, that layest the reins on the neck of thy lusts, and lettest them run whither they will? Be not deceived; pride ariseth from ignorance of these things (1Ti 6:3-4). A sense of my vileness, of what I have deserved, and of what continually in my heart opposeth God, cannot stand with a foolish, light, and wanton carriage: thou wilt then see there are other things to mind than to imitate the butterfly. Alas, all these kind of things are but a painting the devil, and a setting a carnal gloss upon a castle of his. Thou art but making gay the spider: is thy heart ever the sounder for thy fine gait, thy mincing words, and thy lofty looks? Nay, doth not this argue that thy heart is a rotten, cankered, and besotted heart? Oh! That God would but let thee see a little of thy own inside as thou hast others to behold thy outside. Thou painted sepulchre, thou whited wall, will these things be found virtues in the day of God? Or, is this the way that thou takest to mortify sin? "An high look, and a proud heart, the plowing of the wicked, is sin" (Pro 21:4). Pride is the ringleader of the seven abominations that the wise man nameth (Pro 6:16-17), and is that above all that causeth to fall into the condemnation of the devil (1Ti 3:6).

Third, of *Adultry* or *Uncleanness*

Now I come in the last place to touch a word or two of adultery, and then to draw towards a conclusion. Adultery: it hath its place in the heart among the rest of those filthinesses I mentioned before (Mar 7:21-22) of which sin I observe two things.

1. That almost in every place where the apostle layeth down a catalogue of wickednesses, he layeth down adultery, fornication, and uncleanness in the front; as that in Mark 7:21, Romans 1:29, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 5:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, Hebrews 12:16, James 2:11, 1 Peter 2:11, and 2 Peter 2:10. From this I gather that the sin of uncleanness is a very predominant and master sin, easy to overtake the

sinner, as being one of the first that is ready to offer itself on all occasions to break the Law of God.

2. I observe that this sin is committed unawares to many, even so soon as a man hath but looked upon a woman: “I say unto you,” saith Christ,
“that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust,” or desire, “after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mat 5:28). This sin of uncleanness, I say, is a very taking sin; it is natural above all sins to mankind. As it is most natural, so it wants not tempting occasions, having objects for to look on in every corner—wherefore there is need of a double and treble watchfulness in the soul against it. It is better here to make a covenant with our eyes, like Job (Job 31:1) than to let them wander to God’s dishonour, and our own discomfort.

There are these three things which discover [53] a man or woman too much inclining to the uncleanness of their own hearts.

(1.) The first is a wanton eye, or an eye that doth secretly affect itself with such objects as are tickling of the heart with the thoughts of immodesty and uncleanness. Isaiah calls this a wanton eye (Isa 3:16), and Peter an eye full of adultery that cannot cease from sin (2Pe 2:14). This is that also which Christ calleth an evil eye, and John the lust of the flesh, and of the eyes, and doth defile those who are not very watchful over their own hearts (Mar 7:22; 1Jo 2:16). This wanton eye is that which the most holy saints should take heed of because it is apt to seize upon them also. When Paul bids Timothy beseech the young women to walk as becomes the Gospel, he bids him do it with all purity (1Ti 5:1-2). As, who should say, Take heed that while thou instructest them to holiness, thou thyself be not corrupted with the lust of thy eye. O, how many souls in the day of God will curse the day that ever they gave way to a wanton eye!

(2.) The second thing that discovereth one much inclining to the lusts of uncleanness: it is wanton and immodest talk, such as that brazen-faced whore in the 7th of the Proverbs had, or such as they in Peter, who allured “through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error” (2Pe 2:18). “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Mat 12:34); wherefore if we be saints, let us take heed, as of our eye, so of our tongue, and let not the lust of uncleanness, or of adultery, be once named among us, “named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph 5:3). Mark, “Let it not be once

named." This implies that the lusts of uncleanness are devilishly taking; they will both take the heart with eyes and tongue. "Let it not be once named among you."

(3.) Another thing that bespeaks a man or woman inclining to wantonness and uncleanness: it is an adorning themselves in light and wanton apparel. The attire of an harlot is too frequently in our day the attire of professors—a vile thing, and argueth much wantonness and vileness of affections. If those that give way to a wanton eye, wanton words, and immodest apparel, be not whores in their hearts, I know not what to say. Doth a wanton eye argue shamefacedness? Doth wanton talk argue chastity? And doth immodest apparel, with stretched-out necks, naked breasts, a made speech, and mincing gaits, and so on, argue mortification of lusts? If any say that these things may argue pride as well as carnal lusts, well, but why are they proud? Is it not to trick up the body? And why do they with pride trick up the body if it be not to provoke both themselves and others to lusts? God knoweth their hearts without their outsides, and we know their hearts by their outsides.

My friends, I am here treating of good works, and persuading you to fly those things that are hindrances to them; wherefore bear with my plainness when I speak against sin. I would strike it through with every word, because else it will strike us through with many sorrows (1Ti 6:9-10). I do not treat of good works as if the doing of them would save us, for we are justified by His grace, according to the hope of eternal life; yet our sins and evil works will lay us obnoxious to the judgments both of God and man. He that walketh not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel is like to have his peace assaulted often, both by the devil, the Law, death, and hell; yea, and is like to have God hide His face from him also for the iniquity of his covetousness (Isa 57:17).

How can he that carrieth himself basely in the sight of men think he yet well behaveth himself in the sight of God? And if so dim a light as is in man can justly count thee as a transgressor, how shall thy sins be hid from Him Whose "eyelids try the children of men?" (Psa 11:4).

It is true, faith without works justifies us before God (Rom 3:28; 4:5): yet that faith that is alone will be found to leave us sinners in the sight both of God and man (Jam 2:18). And though thou addest nothing to that which saveth thee by what thou canst do, yet thy righteousness may profit the son of man, as also saith the text. But if thou shalt be so careless as to

say, What care I for being righteous to profit others? I tell thee that the love of God is not in thee (Job 35:8; 1Jo 3:17; 1Co 13:1-3). Walk therefore in God's ways, and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear of all these statutes, and say, "This great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deu 4:6).

3. Maintain and Exercise Good Works.

Observe.

Every believer should not only take heed that his works be good, and so for the present do them, but should carefully study to maintain them; that is, to keep in a continual exercise of them.

It is an easier matter to begin to do good than it is to continue therein; and the reason is, there is not so much of a Christian's cross in the beginning of a work as there is in a continual, hearty, conscientious practice thereof. Therefore Christians have need, as to be pressed to do good, so to continue the work. Man by nature is rather a hearer than a doer, Athenian like, continually listening after some new thing; seeing many things, but observing nothing (Act 17:20; Isa 42:20). It is observable that after Christ had divided his hearers into four parts, he condemned three of them for fruitless hearers (Luk 8:5-8). Oh, it is hard continuing believing, continuing loving, continuing resisting all that opposeth; we are subject to be weary of well-doing (Gal 6:9). To pluck out right eyes, to cut off right hands and feet, is no pleasant thing to flesh and blood; and yet none but these shall have the promise of life because none but these will be found to have the effectual work of God's grace in their souls (Mat 18:8-9): "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples *indeed* " (Joh 8:31). And hence it is that you find so many *ifs* in the Scripture about men's happiness, as "if children, then heirs," and "if ye continue in the faith," and "if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Rom 8:17; Col 1:23; Heb 3:14). Not that their continuing in the way of God is the cause of the work being right, but the work being right causeth the continuance therein. As John saith in another place, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, [saith he] they would *no doubt* have continued with us" (1Jo 2:19). But I say, where the work of God indeed is savingly begun, even there is flesh, corruption, and the body of death to oppose it. Therefore should Christians take heed, and look that against these opposites they maintain a continual course of good works among men.

Besides, as there is that in our own bowels that opposeth goodness, so there is the tempter, the wicked one, both to animate these lusts, and to join with them in every assault against every appearance of God in our souls. And hence it is, that he is called the devil, the enemy, the destroyer, and him that seeks continually to devour us (1Pe 5:8). I need say no more but this. He that will walk like a Christian indeed, as he shall find it is requisite that he continue in good works, so his continuing therein will be opposed. If therefore he will continue therein, he must make it his business to study how to oppose those that oppose such a life, that he may continue therein.

4. Affirm and Believe the Doctrine of Justification by Grace.

Now then to help in this, here fitly comes in the last observation, to wit, that the best way both to provoke ourselves and others to good works, it is to be often affirming to others the doctrine of justification by grace, and to believe it ourselves. “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works” (Ti 3:8).

I told you before that good works must flow from faith; and now I tell you that the best way to be fruitful in them is to be much in the exercise of the doctrine of justification by grace, and they both agree; for as faith animates to good works, so the doctrine of grace animates faith. Wherefore, the way to be rich in good works—it is to be rich in faith, and the way to be rich in faith is to be conscientiously affirming the doctrine of grace to others and believing it ourselves.

First, To be constantly affirming it to others. Thus Paul tells Timothy, that if he put the brethren in mind of the truths of the Gospel, he himself should not only be a good minister of Christ but should be nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine (1Ti 4:6). It is the ordinance of God that Christians should be often asserting the things of God each to others; and that by their so doing they should edify one another (Heb 10:24-25; 1Th 5:11).

The doctrine of the Gospel is like the dew and the small rain that distilleth upon the tender grass, wherewith it doth flourish, and is kept green (Deu 32:2). Christians are like the several flowers in a garden that have upon each of them the dew of heaven; which being shaken with the wind, they let fall their dew at each other’s roots whereby they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of one another. For Christians to commune savourly of God’s matters one with another is as if they opened to each other’s nostrils boxes of perfume.[54] Saith Paul to the church at Rome, “I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me” (Rom 1:11-12).

Christians should be often affirming the doctrine of grace, and justification by it, one to another.

Second, As they should be thus doing, so they should live in the power of it themselves; they should by faith suck and drink in this doctrine, as the good ground receiveth the rain—which being done, forthwith there is proclaimed good works. Paul to the Colossians saith thus, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you." But how long ago? Why, "since the day ye heard of it," saith he, "and knew the grace of God in truth" (Col 1:3-6).

Apples and flowers are not made by the gardener, but are an effect of the planting and watering. Plant in the sinner good doctrine, and let it be watered with the word of grace, and as the effect of that, there are the fruits of holiness, and the end—everlasting life (Rom 6:22).

Good doctrine is the doctrine of the Gospel, which showeth to men that God clotheth them with the righteousness of His Son freely, and maketh Him with all His benefits over to them. By which free gift the sinner is made righteous before God, and because he is so, therefore there is infused a principle of grace into the heart, whereby it is both quickened, and bringing forth fruit (Rom 3:21-26; 1Co 1:30; 2Co 5:21; Joh 1:16).

Now then, seeing good works do flow from faith, and seeing faith is nourished by an affirming of the doctrine of the Gospel, take here these few considerations from the doctrine of the Gospel, for the support of thy faith, that thou mayest be indeed fruitful and rich in good works.

Consider 1. The whole Bible was given for this very end, that thou shouldest both believe this doctrine, and live in the comfort and sweetness of it: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom 15:4).

Consider 2. That therefore every promise in the Bible is thine, to strengthen, quicken, and encourage thy heart in believing.

Consider 3. That there is nothing that thou dost can so please God as believing; "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that

hope in his mercy" (Psa 147:11). They please Him, because they embrace His righteousness and so forth.

Consider 4. That all the withdrawings of God from thee are not for the weakening, but for the trial of thy faith; and also, that whatever He suffers Satan, or thy own heart to do, it is not to weaken faith (Job 23:8-10; 1Pe 1:7).

Consider 5. That believing is that which will keep in thy view the things of heaven and glory; and that at which the devil will be discouraged, sin weakened, and thy heart quickened and sweetened (Heb 11:27; Jam 4:7; 1Pe 5:9; Eph 6:16; Rom 15:13).

Consider lastly, By believing, the lover of God is kept with warmth upon the heart, and that this will provoke thee continually to bless God for Christ, for grace, for faith, hope, and all these things, either in God or thee, that doth accompany salvation (2Co 2:14; Psa 103:1-3).

Third, The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins received by faith will make notable work in the heart of a sinner to bring forth good works.

But, forasmuch as there is a body of death and sin in every one that hath the grace of God in this world; and because this body of death will be ever opposing that which is good, as the apostle saith (Rom 7:21), therefore take these few particulars further, for the suppressing that which will hinder a fruitful life.

1. Keep a continual watch over the wretchedness of thy own heart, not to be discouraged at the sight of thy vileness, but to prevent its wickedness; for that will labour either to hinder thee from doing good works, or else will hinder thee in the doing thereof—for evil is present with thee for both these purposes. Take heed then, that thou do not listen to that at any time, but deny, though with much struggling, the workings of sin to the contrary.

2. Let this be continually before thy heart, that God's eye is upon thee, and seeth every secret turning of thy heart, either to or from Him: "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb 4:13).

3. If thou deny to do that good which thou oughtest with what thy God hath given thee, then consider that though He love thy soul, yet He can chastise. First, thy inward man with such troubles that thy life shall be restless and comfortless. Secondly, and can also so blow upon thy outward man, that all thou gettest shall be put in a bag with holes (Psa 89:31-33;

Hag 1:6). And set the case he should license but one thief among thy substance, or one spark of fire among thy barns, how quickly might that be spent ill and against thy will, which thou shouldest have spent to God's glory, and with thy will. And I tell thee further, that if thou want a heart to do good when thou *hast* about thee, thou mayest want comfort in such things thyself from others, when thine is taken from thee. See Jude 1:6-7.

4. Consider, that a life full of good works is the only way on thy part to answer the mercy of God extended to thee. God hath had mercy on thee, and hath saved thee from all thy distresses; God hath not stuck to give thee His Son, His Spirit, and the kingdom of heaven. Saith Paul, "I beseech you therefore…by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:13).

5. Consider, that this is the way to convince all men that the power of God's things hath taken hold of thy heart—I speak to them that hold the head [55]—and say what thou wilt, if thy faith be not accompanied with a holy life, thou shalt be judged a withered branch, a wording professor, salt without savour, and as lifeless as a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal (Joh 15; Mat 13:1; Co 13:1-2). For, say they, show us your faith by your works, for we cannot see your hearts (Jam 2:18). But I say on the contrary, if thou walk as becomes thee who art saved by grace, then thou wilt witness in every man's conscience that thou art a good tree; now thou leavest guilt on the heart of the wicked (1Sa 24:16-17). Now thou takest off occasion from them that desire occasion; and now thou art clear from the blood of all men (2Co 11:12; Act 20:26, 31-35). This is the man also that provoketh others to good works. The ear that heareth such a man shall bless him; and the eye that seeth him shall bear witness to him. "Surely," saith David, "he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance" (Psa 112: 6).

6. Again, The heart that is fullest of good works hath in it at least room for Satan's temptations. And this is the meaning of Peter, where he saith, "Be sober, be vigilant"; that is, be busying thyself in faith and holiness, "because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Pe 5:8). "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely;" and they that add to "faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance…brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity"; and that abounds therein, he

“shall neither be barren nor unfruitful”; he “shall never fall; For so an entrance shall be ministered to (him) abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Pro 10:9; 2Pe 1:5-8; 10-11;).

7. The man who is fullest of good works, he is fittest to live and fittest to die. “I am now,” at any time, “ready to be offered,” saith fruitful Paul (2Ti 4:6). Whereas he that is barren, he is neither fit to live, nor fit to die: to die, he himself is convinced he is not fit. And to live God Himself saith he is not fit: cut him down, why doth he cumber the ground? (Luk 8:7).

Lastly, Consider, to provoke thee to good works, thou shalt have of God when thou comest to glory *a reward for everything thou dost for Him on earth.*

Little do the people of God consider how richly God will reward, what from a right principle and to a right end, is done for Him here. Not a bit of bread to the poor, not a draught of water to the meanest of them that belong to Christ, or the loss of a hair of your head, shall in that day go without its reward (Luk 14:13-14; Mat 10:42).

“For our light affliction,” and so all other pieces of self-denial, “which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2Co 4:17). I tell thee, Christian, be but rich in good works, and thou shalt have more than salvation. Thy salvation thou hast freely by grace through Christ, without works (Eph 2:8-10), but now being justified and saved, and as the fruits hereof, renewed by the Holy Ghost—after this, I say, thou shalt be rewarded for every work that proved good. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb 6:10). Moses counted the reward that he was to have, for a short suffering with the people of God, of greater worth than the treasures of Egypt, the smiles of the king, or the honour of his kingdom (Heb 11:25-27). In a word, let the disappointments that do, and shall most surely befall the fruitless professors, provoke thee to look with all diligence to thy standing. For,

1. Such a one is but deceived and disappointed touching the work of grace he supposeth to be in his heart. He thinks he is a Christian, and hath grace, as faith, hope, and the like, in his soul, yet no fruits of these things manifest themselves in him; indeed his tongue is tipt with a talk and tattle

of religion. Poor man, poor empty man! Faith without works is dead; thy hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost. Thy gifts with which thy soul is possessed are but such as are common to reprobates; thou art therefore disappointed. God reputes thee still but wicked, though thou comest and goest to the place of the Holy (Jam 2:19-20; Job 11:20; 1Cor13:1-3).

2. Therefore all thy joy and comfort must needs fall short of saving comfort, and so leave thee in the suds [56] notwithstanding. Thy joy is the joy of the Pharisees (Joh 5:35), and thy gladness as that of Herod (Mar 6:20), and the longest time it can last, it is but a Scripture-moment (Job 20:5). Alas! In all thy gladness and content with thy religion, thou art but like the boy that plays with brass instead of gold, and with counters instead of that which will go for current coin. Thus, "if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth [or disappoints] himself" (Gal 6:3).

3. This is not all, but look thou certainly for an eternal disappointment in the day of God, for it must be. Thy lamp will out at the first sound the trump of God shall make in thine ears; thou canst not hold up at the appearance of the Son of God in His glory. His very looks will be to thy profession as a strong wind is to a blinking candle, and thou shalt be left only to smoke.

Oh, the alteration that will befall a foolish virgin! She thought she was happy, and that she should have received happiness with those that were right at the heart. But behold the contrary, her lamp is going out; she is now to seek for saving grace when the time of grace is over? Her heaven she thought of is proved a hell, and her god is proved a devil. God hath cast her out of His presence, and claps the door upon her. She pleads her profession and the like, and she hath for her answer repulses from heaven. "So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish; Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure" (Job 8:13-15).

Take heed therefore; thy soul, heaven, and eternity, lies at stake. Yea, they turn either to thee or from thee upon the hinge of thy faith. If it be right, all is thine: if wrong, then all is lost, however thy hopes and expectations are to the contrary. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal 5:6). "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these

things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of unbelief" (Eph 5:6). [57] "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is *rejected*, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned" (Heb 6:7-8).

Objection-

But what shall I do, who am so cold, slothful, and heartless, that I cannot find any heart to do any work for God in this world? Indeed time was when His dew rested all night upon my branches, and when I could with desire, with earnest desire, be doing and working for God; but, alas! Now it is otherwise.

Answer-

If this be true, thy case is sad. Thou art to be pitied; the Lord pity thee. And for thy recovery out of this condition, I would give thee no other counsel than was given to Ephesus when she had lost her first love.

1. "Remember," saith Christ, "from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (Rev 2:5).

Mark: Thy first work is to enter into a serious considering, and remembrance from whence thou art fallen. Remember that thou hast left thy God, the stay of thy soul, and Him without Whom there is no stay, comfort, or strength, for thee either to do or suffer anything in this world. "Without me," saith He, "ye can do nothing" (Joh 15:5). A sad condition; the remembrance of this, for certain, is the first step to the recovering a backsliding heart. For the right remembrance of this doth bring to mind what loss that soul hath sustained that is in this condition, how it hath lost its former visits, smiles, and consolations of God: when thy conscience was suppled with the blood of thy Saviour; when every step thou tookest was, as it were, in honey and butter; and when thy heart could meditate terror with comfort (Job 29:2-6; Isa 33:14-19). Instead of which, thou feelest darkness, hardness of heart, and the thoughts of God are terrible to thee (Psa 77:3). Now God never visits thee; or if He doth, it is but as a wayfaring man that tarrieth but for a night (Jer 14:8-9).

This also brings to mind how the case is altered with thee, touching thy confidence in God for thy future happiness, how uncertain thou now art of thy hopes for heaven, how much this life doth hang in doubt before thee (Deu 28:65-66).

2. “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent.” These are words well put together for a solid considering of what I have lost in my declining, will provoke in my heart a sorrow and godly heaviness, whereby I shall be forced to bemoan my condition, and say, “I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now” (Hos 2:7).

And believe it, the reason of God’s standing off from giving the comfortable communion with Himself: it is that thou mightest first see the difference between sticking close to God, and forsaking of him. And next, that thou mightest indeed acknowledge thy offence, and seek His face (Hos 5:15). He taketh no pleasure in thy forlorn condition; He had rather thou shouldest have Him in thy bosom, only He will have it in His own way. “He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; [then] He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light” (Job 33:27-28).

3. “Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.”

As there should be a remembering and a repenting, so there should be a hearty doing our first works; a believing as before, a laying hold of the things of heaven and glory, as at the first; for now is God returned to thee as before (Zec 1:16). And though thou mayest, through the loss of thy locks, with Samson, be weak at the first, yet, in short time, thy hair will grow again; that is, thy former experience will in short space be as long, large, and strong as in the former times. Indeed at the first thou wilt find all the wheels of thy soul rusty, and all the strings of thine heart out of tune. As also when thou first beginnest to stir, the dust and filth of thy heart will, like smoke, trouble thee from that clear beholding the grace of thy God, and His love to thy soul. But yet wait and go on, and though thou findest thyself as unable to do anything as thou formerly couldest—yet I say, up, and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee; for he hath not despised the day of thy small things (1Ch 22:16; Zec 4:10).

I know thou wilt be afflicted with a thousand temptations to drive thee to despair, that thy faith may be faint, and so forth. But against all them set thou the Word of God, the promise of grace, the blood of Christ, and the examples of God’s goodness to the great backsliders that are for thy encouragement recorded in the scriptures of truth. And remember, that turning to God after backsliding is the greatest piece of service thou canst

do for Him, and the greatest honour thou canst bring to the blood of Christ. And know farther, that God, to show His willing reception of so unworthy a creature, saith there shall be joy in heaven at thy conversion to Him again (Luke 15:7, 10).

5. To Conclude

If thou yet, notwithstanding what hath been said, dost remain a backslider:

1. Then remember that thou must die. And remember also, that when the terrors of God, of death, and a backslidden heart, meet together, there will be sad work in that soul. This is the man that hangeth tilting over the mouth of hell, while death is cutting the thread of his life.

2. Remember, that though God doth sometimes, yea often, receive backsliders, yet it is not always so. Some draw back into perdition; for, because they have flung up God, and would none of Him, He in justice flings up them and their souls for ever (Pro 1:24-28).

I have observed that sometimes God, as it were in revenge for injury done Him, doth snatch away souls in the very nick of their backsliding, as He served Lot's wife when He turned her into a pillar of salt, even while she was looking over her shoulder to Sodom (Gen 19:26)—an example that every backslider should remember with astonishment (Luk 17:32).

Thus have I, in few words, written to you before I die, a word to provoke you to faith and holiness because I desire that you may have the life that is laid up for all them that believe in the Lord Jesus, and love one another, when I am deceased. Though there I shall rest from my labours, and be in paradise, as through grace I comfortably believe, yet it is not there, but here, I must do you good. Wherefore, I not knowing the shortness of my life, nor the hindrance that hereafter I may have of serving my God and you, I have taken this opportunity to present these few lines unto you for your edification.

Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Farewell.

Short Biography of John Bunyan

John Bunyan (1628-1688) was born of a poor family near Bedford, England. He repaired pots and pans before being called to preach the Gospel full time. He was imprisoned in 1660 for refusing to compromise with the practices of the Church of England. While in jail for 12 years, he penned The Pilgrim's Progress, which has been in continuous print since then and is the second best selling book of all time after the Holy Bible.

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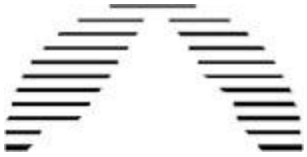
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Footnotes marked "ED" are from George Offor's edition of The Collected Works of John Bunyan, first published in 1853, available in print from Banner of Truth: www.banneroftruth.org.

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[1] **main** – the bulk; the greater part.

[2] **divers** – different; various.

[3] "Where the great red dragon Satan had his seat"—(Dr. John Gill, 1697-1771, *Exposition on the Old and New Testaments.* See also Revelation 12—ED).

[4] **want** – lack; be deficient in.

[5] **carnal man** – man in his flesh, natural man; the unbeliever.

[6] **never so** – ever so; very.

[7] **naughty** – bad; worthless.

[8] **contemned** – despised; scorned; rejected with disdain.

[9] **hence** – from this place; from this time; from this cause or reason.

[10] **wonderfully** – in a manner that rouses wonder or surprise.

[11] **conversation** – manner of life; behavior.

[12] **to wit** – namely; that is to say.

[13] **Nonconformists** – dissenters; those Christians in Great Britain such as Bunyan who refused to conform to the worship practices of the Church of England in the 1600's.

[14] This manly, bold and upright statement of truth was published in 1674, only two years after the author's deliverance from twelve years and a half's incarceration in a damp, miserable jail for nonconformity! None but those whose close communion with God inspires them with the confessor's courage can understand the spirit which dictated such language. Had all dissenters used such faithful words, the Church would long ago have been emancipated from persecution in this country—*Editor.*

[15] **mettled** – high spirited; ardent; full of fire.

[16] **wary** – cautious; careful.

[17] **room** – place.

[18] This is a very extensive and awful delusion. To mistake the "outward and visible sign" for the "inward and spiritual grace" is a very general and fatal error. Of its sad effects all religious parties have warned their members. It has done infinite damage to the souls of men—*Editor.*

[19] **carriages** – behavior; conduct; personal manners.

[20] **peradventure** – perhaps.

[21] **convenient** – suitable; proper; adapted to needs.

[22] The queen of Sheba was as much or more delighted with the order, harmony, and happiness of Solomon's household than she was with all the splendour and magnificence. It is to this Bunyan refers in this quotation—*Editor.*

[23] **malapert** – impudent.

[24] "Though the words of the wise are as nails fastened by the master of assemblies (Ecc 12:11) yet sure their examples are the hammer to drive them in to take the deeper hold. A father that whipt his son for swearing, and swore himself while he whipt him did more harm by his example than good by his correction"—(Fuller, 1608-1661, *Holy State*, p. 11; ED).

[25] How exceedingly admirable are all these scriptural directions, warnings, and cautions. Happy are those parents and their children where such wisdom is manifested in the painful duty of administering counsel and correction—*Editor.*

[26] One of the Saxon laws was that if a serf or villain work on Sunday by his lord's command, he shall be a free man—(Spelman, c.1563-1641, *Concilia*, Answ. 692; ED).

[27] **beguiled** – misled by cheating or tricking; deceived.

[28] **wire-draw** – draw out long and thin, as a wire.

[29] "The rust of money in the rich man's purse, unjustly detained from the labourer, will poison and infect his whole estate"—(*Holy State*, p. 16; ED).

[30] The Apostle Peter, in his solemn injunctions to married persons, commences with the wife. Fuller observes upon this, "And sure it was fitting that women should first have their lesson given them because it is harder to be learned, and therefore they need have the more time to con it"—(*Holy State*, p. 1; ED).

[31] **brangling** – quarreling.

[32] **odious** – hateful; disgusting.

[33] **cankering** – corroding, corrupting, or destroying.

[34] **yokefellows** – companions, partners, or associates.

[35] "In her husband's absence she is wife and deputy husband, which makes her double the files of her diligence. At his return he finds all things so well that he wonders to see himself at home when he was abroad"—(*Holy State*, p. 2; ED).

[36] **froward** – stubbornly contrary and disobedient.

[37] **churlish** – rude; rough in temper; unfeeling.

[38] Bunyan's words are "to show pity," probably take from the word "goodness" in the margin of the Bible; but lest it might be a typographical error, the usual rendering is given in this quotation—*Editor.*

[39] **requite** – repay; recompense; return an equivalent.

[40] "What is a child but a piece of the parents wrapped up in another skin"—(Flavel, 1627-1691).

[41] **repining** – discontented complaining; murmuring.

[42] Bunyan's silence, in all his writings, concerning the state of his parents as to godliness, may lead us to fear that this fervent ejaculation had often been poured forth by his own soul on behalf of his father and mother. All that we know of them is that they were poor, but gave their children the best education their means afforded; as to their piety he is silent—*Editor.*

[43] **neighbourhood** – state of living near one another.

[44] **to the Greeks** – Bunyan in this follows the Puritan translation. The word "Greeks" is in the margin of the Authorized Bible—*Editor.*

[45] **communicate** – impart; give to another; bestow.

[46] **loth** – unwilling; reluctant; look on with intense dislike.

[47] **liberal** – bountiful; generous.

[48] **churl** – a rude, ill-bred man; a miser.

[49] **mincing** –affectedly elegant or dainty.

[50] **made carriage** –artfully contrived manners.

[51] **an affecting** – making a pretense of to impress others; a taking on of.

[52] **wanton** – sexually unrestrained.

[53] **discover** – reveal; make known.

[54] This is a most beautiful passage, unequalled by any ancient or modern author. Such a view of Church fellowship does honour to the head and heart of the prince of allegorists. It is worthy to be printed in letters of gold and presented to every candidate for Church fellowship among all Christian societies of every denomination—*Editor.*

[55] To "hold the head" is to make a very prominent profession of religion—*Editor.*

[56] **in the suds** – in turmoil or difficulties.
[57] “Of unbelief” see margin of the Bible.—Ed