

## OF THE DUTY OF HUSBANDS TOWARD THEIR WIVES.

*Son.* Four things are necessarily required of every true and godly christian married man, if he will do the duty of a faithful husband toward his wife.

The duty of  
an husband  
is to love  
his wife.

*Father.* Which are they? *Son.* The first is, that he love his wife.

*Father.* How should he love her? *Son.* Even as himself, and as Christ loved his congregation.

Eph. v.

*Father.* Where findest thou that? *Son.* St Paul saith: "Ye husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the congregation, and gave himself for it, to sanctify it, and cleansed it in the fountain of water through the word, to make it unto himself a glorious congregation, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blame. 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 doth the congregation." Again he saith: "Ye husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter to them."

Col. iii.

Certain  
causes why  
the husband  
ought to love  
his wife.

*Father.* Wherefore should the husband love his wife? *Son.* First, because God hath so commanded, as we tofore heard; whose commandment to disobey is more than double wickedness. The husband, in loving his wife according to the will of God, doth with his obedience greatly advance the glory of God, and the honour of his holy name; and it is also a testimony to his own conscience, that God was the author of his marriage, and that he, living quietly with his wife in that state, pleaseth God.

Hos. ii.

Eph. v.

Secondly, the husband ought to love his wife, because his marriage, which he hath made with his wife in the fear of God, is an holy mystery of that spiritual marriage and true love, which Christ the Son hath made with every true faithful soul, as he saith by the prophet: "I will marry thee unto me in faith." For as a faithful husband brenneth with true and unfeigned love toward his dear wife, so likewise is the love of Christ toward his holy congregation most fervent and brenning; insomuch that "we are now become members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones": which thing he hath most manifestly declared by taking man's nature upon him.

Gen. ii.  
Matt. xix.  
Eph. v.

Thirdly, the married man ought to love his wife, not for the satisfying of his carnal pleasure, not for nobility of parentage, not for beauty, nor for properness of personage, nor yet for riches, &c., (for such love is between ruffians and harlots); but because she is his sister in the christian faith, and inheritor with him of God's most glorious kingdom: again, because she is given him of God to be an helper unto him, and a faithful yoke-fellow, as well in adversity as in prosperity. Moreover, he shall love her because she is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones; and in fine, because she is endued through the Spirit of God with noble and godly virtues, as shamefacedness, chastity, modesty, sobriety, diligence, sadness<sup>1</sup>, patience, temperance, silence, obedience, and such other ghostly virtues. All these things, diligently considered, shall easily provoke a true christian married man dearly and heartily to love his wife, although she be never so poor and base in beauty.

Gen. ii.

Matt. xix.

*Father.* Must the love of a married man toward his wife excel his love toward all other persons? *Son.* Yea, verily. For we read that, so soon as God at the beginning had brought the woman unto Adam, he brast out into these words, and said: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined with his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

Matt. xix.

Rom. vii.

*Father.* How long ought this love to continue between man and wife? *Son.* So long as they live together, as Christ saith: "Let not man put asunder that which God hath coupled together." "The woman," saith St Paul, "which is in subjection to a man, is bound by the law to the man as long as he liveth. But if the man be dead, she is loosed from the law of the man," &c. So likewise may it be said of the man. So long as God blesseth the man and wife together with life, ought unfeigned love to remain between them, yea, and if it be possible, daily to increase more and more; so far is it off that it ought in any point to be diminished.

[<sup>1</sup> Sadness: gravity.]

*Father.* What is required more of a married man? *Son.* That he so dearly love his wife, that he do not only not touch any other woman, but also that he refrain both his eyes and the thoughts of his heart from coveting any strange flesh.

*Father.* Where is that commanded? *Son.* Yea, rather where is it not commanded? Is not this the commandment of God, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife?" Exod. xx.  
Deut. v.

*Father.* Is it not enough, if I do abstain from the act of gross whoredom, except I also keep my heart pure from filthy and unclean thoughts? *Son.* Christ saith: "Whosoever looketh on another man's wife to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matt. v.

*Father.* Must I also keep mine eyes pure and chaste, and refrain them also from lascivious and wanton sights? *Son.* That is our duty.

*Father.* But it is hard so to do.

*Son.* I grant. In our power it lieth not so to do. We must therefore pray unto God with the psalmograph for the cleanness of the heart, and say: "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." And for the stableness of the eyes pray must we on this manner with the psalmograph also: "O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way." It shall also profit us greatly to consider alway in our mind these sentences of the holy scripture: "Apply not thyself to the deceitfulness of a woman. For the lips of an harlot are a dropping honey-comb, and her throat is more glistening than oil. But at the last she is as bitter as wormwood, and her tongue as sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down unto death, and her steps pierce through hell, &c. Keep thy way far from her, and come not nigh the doors of her house, &c. Be glad with the wife of thy youth. Loving is the hind, and friendly is the roe. Let her breasts always satisfy thee, and hold thee ever content with her love. My son, why wilt thou have pleasure in an harlot, and embrace the bosom of another woman? For every man's ways are open in the sight of God; and he pondereth all their goings. The wickedness of the ungodly shall catch himself, and with the snares of his own sins shall he be trapped," &c. "Keep thee from the evil woman, and from the flattering tongue of the harlot, that thou lust not after her beauty in thy heart, and lest thou be taken with her fair looks. An harlot will make a man to beg his bread; but an honest married wife will hunt for the precious life. May a man carry fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be brent? Or can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be hurt? Even so, whosoever goeth in to his neighbour's wife and toucheth her cannot be unguilty." "Therefore let not thine heart wander in the ways of an whore, and be not thou deceived in her paths. For many one hath she wounded and cast down; yea, many a strong man hath been slain by the means of her. Her houses are the way unto hell, and bring men down into the chambers of death." Old Toby said to his son: "My son, keep thee well from whoredom; and beside thy wife, see that no fault be known of thee." Job also saith: "I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I would not look upon a damsel. For how great a portion shall I have of God, and what inheritance from the Almighty on high? As for the ungodly, and he that joineth himself to the company of wicked doers, shall not destruction and misery come upon him?" St Paul saith: "If any that is called a brother (that is to say, a Christian) be an whoremonger, see that ye eat not with him." "Flee fornication," for "neither fornicators, neither adulterers, neither weaklings, neither abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Again he saith: "Wedlock is honourable among all persons, and the bed undefiled. But whoremongers and adulterers God shall judge." Psal. li.  
Psal. cxix.  
Prov. v.  
Prov. vi.  
Prov. vii.  
Tob. iv.  
Job xxxi.  
1 Cor. v.  
1 Cor. vi.  
Heb. xiii.

Moreover, it shall not be unfitting nor out of the way to consider how grievously God in all ages hath punished whoredom. For whoredom the whole world almost was drowned with waters. For whoredom Sodom and Gomorre, with certain other cities, were consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven. For whoredom all the citizens of Sichem were slain with sword. For whoredom there were slain in the wilderness on one day twenty-three thousand of the Israelites. For whoredom the whole tribe of Benjamin was almost slain and destroyed. For whoredom the sons of

Gen. vi.  
Gen. xix.  
Gen. xxxiv.  
Num. xxv.  
Judg. xx.  
1 Sam. ii.

2 Sam. xi. Hely the priest perished in battle. For whoredom David and his whole kingdom fell  
1 Kings xi. into great miseries. For whoredom Salomon fell into idolatry, and into other grievous sins.

Not only the holy scriptures, but also human histories, do set forth unto us many and horrible examples of God's wrath and fierce vengeance against whoremongers and adulterers, which ought at all times to be remembered, but specially when the devil and the flesh move and tempt us unto the uncleanness of the body. The consideration of these things shall easily drive away Satan and his subtile suggestions, with that pestiferous mermaid the flesh, and all her deceitful pleasures, and cause the godly married man to rest in the love of his wife, all strange women utterly refused.

*Father.* How adultery and whoredom, with all other uncleanness of the body, may be avoided, thou declaredst very godly in the exposition of the seventh commandment. Therefore go forth, and let me hear more of the duty of a married man toward his wife. *Son.* Thirdly, it is required of every godly married man, that he make provision for his wife, children, and family, that they lack nothing that is necessary for their living, but that he minister unto them all good things. For if any man be negligent in this behalf, and "provide not for his household, he hath denied the faith," saith St Paul, "and he is worse than an infidel."

*Father.* Ought the man to labour for his wife and family? Where doth the word of God teach that? *Son.* Did not God, after the transgression of his commandment in paradise, enjoin penance both to man and to woman? As he spake thus to the woman, "In multiplying I will multiply thy sorrow and thy conceiving; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thy lust shall pertain to thy husband, and he shall have the rule of thee:" so likewise saith he to the man, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou be turned again into the ground, out of the which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt be turned again." Here is a general commandment given to all men, that no man be idle, but that every man work some good and necessary thing, profitable both for himself and for other. Who seeth not then, even of this one commandment of God, that the married man is bound to labour, both for himself and for all such as belong unto him? As St Paul writeth of himself, that he with his own hands got all things necessary, not only for himself, but also for so many as were with him.

Likewise saith the psalmograph: "Thou shalt eat the labours of thine hands. O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be. Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine upon the walls of thy house: thy children like the olive-branches round about thy table. Lo, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." St Paul commandeth, that "every man should labour some good thing, that he may have to give unto him that lacketh and is in need." How much more is it the duty of a godly married man to labour, that he may have wherewith to feed his hungry wife and children! The man is bound to "love his wife, as Christ loved the congregation." Now who knoweth not, that of Christ we receive all good things, whatsoever we have need of? Nothing is expedient for us, but that he giveth it unto us abundantly. Likewise, after the example of Christ ought the husband to provide all good and necessary things for his wife. Again: "The husband ought to love his wife as himself, yea, as his own flesh." The husband "hateth not his own flesh," neither doth he suffer it to perish for hunger, "but he feedeth it and cherisheth it," and bestoweth upon it all good things: so likewise ought he to do unto his wife, and to suffer her to lack no good thing. Item, the husband and the wife are one flesh and one body; the husband therefore ought to make no less provision for his wife than for himself. To be short, this sentence of St Paul shall for ever and ever abide true, yea, and that unto the condemnation of all sluggish and negligent husbands, and such like: "If any man do not provide for such as belong unto him, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

How careful husbands ought to be for their wives and children, the examples of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Toby, and such like do sufficiently declare. Therefore whosoever intendeth to marry in the fear of God, he ought first of all to consider if he have whereof to nourish his wife, and to bring up his children. If he have not, let him abstain from marriage, till he have learned some honest and virtuous occupation, whereby he shall be able to feed both himself and his. They that are otherwise

The husband is bound to make provision for his wife and family.  
1 Tim. v.

Of labour.

Gen. iii.

Acts xx.

Psal. cxviii.

Eph. iv.

Eph. v.

The husband ought to be the same to his wife that he is to himself.  
Eph. v.

1 Tim. v.

mind ed fall for the most part after their marriage unto beggary, and from beggary unto stealing, and from stealing to hanging. And in the mean season they give an occasion to their wives to give themselves to uncleanness of life, and to play the whores, not knowing otherwise how to live, for lack of provision. Better had it been for such husbands to have had a mill-stone tied about their necks, and to be cast into the midst of the sea, than so loosely to marry, and afterward to be the authors of so many and so grievous evils.

*Father.* Is it the duty of an husband only to provide for his wife things necessary for the body? *Son.* Not only. His duty is also to provide things necessary for her soul's health, as right institution in the mysteries of Christ's religion, knowledge of God's holy word, the true understanding of the holy sacraments, and all other things that be necessary for the salvation of her soul.

Husbands ought to provide for the safeguard of their wives, both body and soul.

*Father.* How provest thou that the man is thus bound to teach his wife the way of truth, and to inform her from time to time in all such matters as appertain unto salvation and unto everlasting life? *Son.* St Paul hath these words: "Let 1 Cor. xiv. your women keep silence in the congregations. For it is not permitted unto them to speak; but to be under obedience, as the law saith. If they will learn any thing, Gen. iii. let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the congregation." Again: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." Here 1 Tim. ii. is it evident, that if the wife lack knowledge in spiritual and heavenly things, she ought to ask her husband, and to learn of him. If the wife be bound to learn of her husband, then is the husband bound to teach his wife, and to inform her with the knowledge of God's mysteries. Is not the unbelieving wife many times sanctified by the believing husband? "How knowest thou, O man," saith St Paul, "whether 1 Cor. vii. thou shalt save thy wife or no?" How can the faithful man save his unfaithful wife, but by teaching her the word of salvation? The man is bound to "love his wife, as Eph. v. Christ loved the congregation." Christ loveth so his congregation, that when he was here corporally on earth, he himself taught it; and now that he is gone from us concerning his bodily presence, he sendeth unto the faithful his holy Spirit, to instruct and to teach them, and to lead them into the way of truth, as he saith by the prophet: "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," &c. Again he saith: "That Comforter, that Holy Spirit, whom the Father shall send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and lead you into all truth." After the example of Christ ought the husband to instruct his wife, and to seek all means possible to bring her unto the truth. Again, the man is bound to "love his wife as himself." Is there any man so estranged from all wit Eph. v. and reason, that he desire to be ignorant of those things which concern his salvation? Will not he rather seek all means possible to be taught, and to come unto the knowledge of those things? Even that care ought the man also to have for his wife, that she in like manner may have the perfect knowledge of the way of salvation. We are commanded to "teach and warn one another": and shall not the husband Col. iii. teach his wife, and warn her of those things that belong unto her salvation? Every man is a bishop in his own house. Who seeth not then that the householder is bound to teach his household, the chief member whereof the wife is, and therefore necessarily to be instructed and taught of her husband?

But it is to be noted in this part of the husband's duty, that the man is not only bound to provide for his wife both bodily and ghostly, but also to defend her from all injury and displeasure. Her life, her honesty, her good name, and her health ought he to conserve, keep, and maintain, yea, to put himself in danger and peril for the safeguard of his wife, rather than any harm should chance unto her; following in this behalf the example of Christ, which for the defence of his church bestowed his blood and life. And for this cause "is man head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the congregation;" namely, to govern, rule, defend, preserve, and maintain her in all godliness and honesty, and to tender her and her wealth, even as the head studieth, deviseth, and compasseth all means possible how to conserve and keep all the members of the body in safety, health, and wealth.

The husband is bound to defend his wife from all injuries.

Eph. v. Why man is appointed to be the head of the woman.

*Father.* It is meet and convenient that the man should this do. But now, my

The husband  
ought to bear  
with his  
wife.

son, tell me what is the fourth and last part of the office and duty of a husband toward his wife. *Son.* To bear and forbear his wife; to dissemble the faults of his wife; not to see, but to wink sometime at her negligences; to cover her vices; to forgive her sins; not to be churlish and cruel toward her, but quiet, gentle, modest, patient, long-suffering, kind, and soft in all his behaviour toward her, and even such one as a gentle and tender father is toward his most dear and sweet child; ever remembering that that sex, (I mean the feminine kind,) is more weak both in body and mind than the man is, and therefore is called in the holy scripture "the weaker vessel." And this is it that St Paul saith: "Love your wives, ye husbands, and be not bitter unto them." Hereto agreeth the saying of St Peter: "Ye men, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as unto them that are heirs of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

1 Pet. iii.

Col. iii.

1 Pet. iii.



That Christ is to the congregation, that same ought every husband to be to his wife. Now who knoweth not in what state Christ took the congregation to his wife? and how many of her faults he doth daily dissemble, and will not see, but rather cover them, never laying them to her charge, and for his love sake toward her recounteth her faultless, fair, and beautiful, although in herself and of herself spotted with divers blemishes, as it is written: "I am black, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, like as the tents of Cedarnes, and as the hangings of Salomon; but yet I am fair and well-favoured withal." The congregation in herself is black and deformed; but in Christ she is fair and well-favoured. Again, though the congregation runneth sometime astray, and followeth strange lovers, yet is not he so angry with her, but that he patiently abideth her conversion; and if she at any time return again unto him, he receiveth her most joyfully, and embraceth her most lovingly, never laying to her charge afterward whatsoever tofore she hath done amiss; as he himself saith by the prophet: "Commonly when a man putteth away his wife, and she goeth from him, and marrieth with another, then the question is, should he resort unto her any more after that? Shall not that woman be then defiled and unclean? But as for thee, thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet turn again to me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee." For "I, yea, even I only, am he that for mine own self's sake do away thine offences, and forget thy sins, so that I will never think upon them any more."

Cant. i.

Jer. iii.

Isai. xliii.

Rom. xv.  
Gal. vi.  
Col. iii.  
Rom. xii.



After this manner ought the husband to deal with his wife, and, as I may so speak, be even a Christ unto her. Moreover, who knoweth not that such as are strong are commanded in the word of God to bear the infirmities of those that are weak; yea, not only to bear patiently what is done against them, but also to forgive it, and for evil to recompense good? Ought not the man much more to do this to his wife, which is his own flesh and his own bones? If the foot chance sometime to stumble, so that the body do fall, and is put in jeopardy, do all the other members of the body rise up against the foot, and either grievously smite it, or else cut it off? Nothing less, but rather bear it both quietly and patiently, and are afterward more circumspect, that the foot may no more stumble. Whatsoever one member is to another member of the same body, even the very same ought the husband to be to his wife; forasmuch as "they two are one flesh." "Men," saith St Paul, "ought so to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. No man at any time hath hated his own flesh; but he rather cherisheth it, and nourisheth it, even as the Lord doth the congregation. So ought men to do to their wives."

Eph. v.

*Father.* There can be no long concord between man and wife, except one bear with another, and one wink at another's faults. Therefore in this behalf the currish and doggish behaviour of some loose-bands, rather than husbands, is greatly to be reprov'd, which will nothing at all bear with their wives, but all things take to the worst part; yea, be the fault never so little, they make of a fly an elephant, and of a mole-hill a mountain; making such a stir in the house, as though heaven and earth should go together. *Son.* These husbands are much worse than the heathen philosopher Socrates, which, to maintain peace and quietness in his house, was well contented to bear all kinds of displeasures at his wife's hand.

Socrates.

*Father.* They entreating their wives evil have always this saying of God: "Thou shalt be under the power of thy husband; and he shall rule thee," and keep thee under. And hereof they gather that they may do with their wives what they lust, and use them, yea, rather abuse them, at their pleasure. *Son.* Husbands are not appointed heads and rulers of the women unto this end, that they should reign over their wives like lords, or bridle them like horses, or make them to couch down like dogs, or to tumble before them in the mire like swine; but to be the very same to their wives that Christ is to the congregation, that is to say, such as should at all times defend their wives from all perils and dangers, and provide for them all good things, as we have tofore heard; and whatsoever the wives lack either in counsel or wisdom, the husbands to supply it and to make it good; so that the husband shall evermore be that to the wife which the head is to the body. And as the head doth not compass nor imagine how to hurt the body, but rather how to conserve the body and to keep it harmless; so likewise ought the man, whom God hath appointed head of the woman, not to abuse his power, but to use it unto the conservation and health, unto the quietness and safeguard, of his wife; ever setting before his eyes this commandment of God by the apostle: "Ye men, love your wives, and be not bitter unto them." *Col. iii.* St Peter also exhorteth all husbands that they "dwell with their wives according to knowledge;" that is to say, modestly, soberly, quietly, and, as it become christian men, with all patience and long-suffering. *1 Pet. iii.* And to move the men to be the more gentle, the holy apostle putteth them in remembrance that their wives be no dish-clouts, nor no hand-basket-sloys, nor no drudges, nor yet slavish people, but fellow-heirs with them of everlasting life, and so dear to God as the men; forasmuch as they also be made like unto the image of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

*Father.* Some husbands also be so churlish, and so wedded to their own fancy, that, although their wives be both sober, wise, and prudent, and also able to give good counsel; yet will they by no means hear them, nor follow their counsel and advice, but rather do that which their brain-sick heads have determined, although foolish and worthy to be laughed at. [*Son.*] These husbands err and go out of the way. For women also many times can give better counsel than men, and are able to determine what is good and what is otherwise, no less than their husbands. Their counsels therefore and devices are not to be neglected and despised, as the wise and sage Cato monisheth, saying:

Uxoris linguam, si frugi est, ferre memento<sup>1</sup>.

"If thy wife," saith he, "be able to give good counsel, be content to hear her, and to suffer her to speak."

Read we not that when Sara, Abraham's wife, willed her husband to put away Agar, the bond-maid, and her son Ismael, which she had borne to Abraham, Abraham was loth so to do? But God said unto Abraham: "Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and of thy bond-maid. All that Sara hath said unto thee, hear her voice," &c. Did not Isaac also follow the counsel of his wife Rebecca, in sending away their son Jacob from the fury of his brother Esau into Mesopotamia, unto his uncle Laban? Let husbands therefore know that godly and sage matrons have no less the Holy Ghost than the men have, and be endued no less with the fruits of God's Spirit than they are; and therefore are they and their counsels worthy also to be had and to be followed. *Gen. xxi.* *Gen. xxviii.*

*Father.* If all husbands would thus behave themselves toward their wives, as thou hast declared, then should there be continual concord and perfect agreement at all times between married folk, and so a most sweet and pleasant life. *Son.* It is greatly to be wished. For there is nothing that pleaseth God better than amity and concord between husband and wife: which thing God grant, for his mercy's sake!

*Father.* Amen. Now, my son, seeing thou hast shewed the office of an husband toward his wife, let me now hear also what the duty of a wife is unto her husband. *Son.* I will do it gladly, mine own dear father.

[<sup>1</sup> Caton. Dist. Moral. Lib. iii. 49.]

## OF THE DUTY OF WIVES TOWARD THEIR HUSBANDS.

Wives ought  
to be in sub-  
jection to  
their hus-  
bands.

Divers things are remembered in the holy scripture, which do belong unto the office and duty of a true, honest, and godly wife, which I will recite in order. The first is, that she submit herself to the will of her husband, and be content to be admonished, ruled, and governed by him, knowledging him to be her head and lord, and giving him such reverence and honour as the wife oweth to the husband by the word of God.

*Father.* How provest thou that wives ought to be in subjection to their husbands? *Son.* God himself at the beginning said to the woman: "Thou shalt be under the power of thy husband; and he shall rule thee." St Paul saith: "Ye women, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the wife's head, even as Christ is head of the congregation; and the same is he that ministereth salvation to the body. Therefore as the congregation is in subjection to Christ, even so let the wives be in subjection to their husbands in all things." Again: "Ye wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is comely in the Lord." Also in another place: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, neither to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, and then Eve. Adam also was not deceived, but the woman, and was subdued to the transgression. Notwithstanding, through bearing of children she shall be saved, if they continue in faith, and love, and holiness, with discretion." St Peter also saith: "Ye wives, be in subjection to your husbands, that even they which obey not the word may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."

*Father.* Where is the man called the head of the woman? *Son.* St Paul saith: "The husband is the wife's head, even as Christ is the head of the congregation." Again, in that God hath made man ruler over the woman, it evidently appeareth that man by God's ordinance is head of the woman.

*Father.* Where is it commanded that women should reverence their husbands? *Son.* St Paul saith: "Let the wife reverence her husband." And St Peter saith: "In old time holy women.... were obedient to their husbands, even as Sara obeyed Abraham, and called him lord."

*Father.* The stubbornness then and the unreverence which some froward wives use against their husbands is by no means to be commended. *Son.* Yea, rather most highly to be discommended. For God by no means can abide that the wife should grow up unto such arrogancy, pride, and haughtiness of mind, that she should in any condition lout or flout, contemn and despise her husband, whom God hath appointed her head, although he be never so simple, homely, plain, and of slender wit or policy; as we may see in the history of Michol, Saul's daughter and David's wife, which despised David, and laughed him to scorn as a light-brained fellow, because he danced before the ark of the Lord. But God did plague her for her unreverence toward her husband; so that she had no child unto the day of her death. And as this Michol escaped not unpunished for the abusing of herself against her husband David, no more shall those unreverent, scornful, and disobedient wives go away unplagued from the face of God. God by no means can abide that his ordinance should be neglected and despised. Look what subjection, reverence, obedience, worship, and honour the congregation oweth to Christ her head; even the very same, as I may so speak, oweth the wife unto her husband, as St Paul saith: "Ye women, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the wife's head, even as Christ is the head of the congregation." "Therefore as the congregation is in subjection to Christ, even so let the wives be in subjection to their husbands in all things." And look, what great offence the congregation committeth, when unreverently she disobeyeth Christ her head; even the like offence committeth the wife, as I may so speak, when she disobeyeth her husband, whom God hath appointed to be her head. For it is written: "Let the wives be in subjection to their husbands in all things."

*Father.* But what if the husbands should command their wives to do things contrary to the commandment of God? shall they also obey them in this behalf; seeing it is said, "Let the wives be in subjection to their husbands in all things?" *Son.* Here the wives owe no obedience to their husbands. "We must obey God more than men." If the husband, for fear of the loss of his goods or life, should command his wife to commit idolatry, and to defile herself with image-service; or for lucre's sake move his wife to play the harlot; here the wife ought not by any means to obey her husband, nor to satisfy his commandment, but rather to forsake him, or to suffer death, if the cruelty of the time should so require. Obedience to God and to his holy word ought to be preferred before all obedience to be shewed unto man and unto his commandments. Therefore, if the man will challenge of the woman the obedience, subjection, and reverence that the congregation oweth to her Head; let the man provide that he be the same to his wife that Christ is to the congregation, and that he command nothing, but that may stand with the word of God, and work God's favour and everlasting salvation to his wife so obeying; as Paul writeth of Christ: "Christ," saith he, "is the head of the congregation; and the same is he that ministereth salvation to the body." Wives owe no obedience to their husbands commanding wicked things.

*Father.* Godly spoken. But what followeth concerning the office of the wife?

*Son.* The second point of an honest and godly matron is that she truly, dearly, faithfully, and unfeignedly love her husband. And this her love toward her husband shall not rise of any carnal pleasure, beauty, riches, strength, nobility, goodness of personage, or of any outward thing; but only of obedience toward the commandment of God. For God hath commanded that wives should love their husbands. If we ought to love all men as ourselves, how dear then ought the love to be that should be between man and wife, whom God hath coupled together, and which are one flesh, and members one of another's body! The married woman therefore shall love her husband as herself, and think her own husband in her eyes to be most fair, most beautiful, most proper, most handsome, most amiable, most honest, most garnished with all virtues and qualities that become a godly husband; which opinion the husband also ought to have of his wife, that one may unfeignedly rejoice in another, and heartily love one another. "In three things," saith the wise man, "hath my spirit ever had pleasure, which also are allowed before God and man: the concord of brethren, the love of neighbours, and man and wife that agreeth well together." This love, grafted in the wife's heart toward her husband by the Holy Ghost, shall make her to do all things willingly, and to seek all means possible to please her husband, and by no means to offend and displease him. This love shall so work in her, that she shall accommodate and apply herself and all her studies, labours, and travails wholly unto the contentation of her husband's mind in all honest and godly things; yea, and that not only at commandment, but also, as they use to say, at a beck. For the nature of true and hearty love is such, that it need no prescription of laws; for freely and of itself it doth more than any law can require of it. This love shall be of such efficacy, virtue, might, power, and strength, that no persuasions, no flattering words, no fair promises, no gifts, no tokens, &c., shall be able to turn her mind from her husband, and to entangle her with strange love, and so to make her to defile her husband's bed, and to cast away her first faith and promise that she made to her husband. Tit. ii. Wives ought to love their husbands. [Eccles. xxv.] The nature of love.

*Father.* Would God this love were in the hearts of all married women in these our days! Then should not holy and honourable matrimony be so defiled with adultery, whoredom, and all other uncleanness, as it is now (alas, for pity!), yea, and that almost without check or punishment. *Son.* The devil, which "goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," is enemy to all degrees that God hath ordained; but specially to the christian state of holy matrimony, as we may see from the beginning. He can by no means abide that this holy order should be kept of the married folk unspotted and without blemish. Therefore a thousand ways deviseth he to pollute and defile the honourable state of matrimony, and specially by fornication, adultery, incest, and such other most damnable uncleanness. It shall therefore, as we have tofore spoken of the man, be necessary for every godly married woman ever to set before her eyes 1 Pet. v. Gen. iii.



all those commandments of God which forbid whoredom and adultery, and also all those most terrible histories of God's anger against whores and whoremongers, that be mentioned in the holy bible.

It shall not be unprofitable also to consider with herself her marriage promise, that she hath made to her husband before God and before his holy congregation; from the which to fall, and the which to transgress and break, is more than double wickedness, and deserveth not only horrible plagues in this world, but also everlasting damnation.

Neither shall it be unfitting or out of the way to remember secretly with herself, what a great diversity there is between an honest married wife and a strumpet or whore. The blessing of God is upon the godly married woman: the curse and vengeance of God is upon the whore. The honest married woman hath a free and joyful conscience: the whore hath an unrestful mind in her, tormenting her continually with the remembrance of her wicked living, as with the painful pains of hell-fire. The faithful married woman delighteth in the presence of her husband: the whore abhorreth her husband, and hath all her pleasure in the company of strange lovers. The true married woman seeketh how to enrich her husband: the whore deviseth all means possible to impoverish him. The godly married woman hath great joy when she beholdeth her true and natural children, being well assured that they are the blessings of God, forasmuch as they are the fruit of her matrimony by her lawful husband: the whore hath no delight in her children, forasmuch as, so oft as she beholdeth them, they are witnesses against her, both of her most detestable whoredom, and also of her damnation, putting her in remembrance of her unfaithfulness against her husband, and of her wicked behaviour with strange lovers; again, that her children were not begotten in true matrimony, but are bastards and misbegotten, and therefore they were both begotten, conceived, and born in the heavy anger, wrath, and displeasure of God; so that by this means they cannot prosper, but have short continuance on the earth, as the wise man saith: "Thus shall it also go with every wife that leaveth her husband, and gets the inheritance by the strange marriage (that is to say, she shall be openly punished in the streets of the city, and she shall be chased abroad like a young horse-foal; and when she thinketh least upon it, then shall she be taken: thus shall she be put to shame of every man, because she would not understand the fear of the Lord). For first, she hath been unfaithful unto the law of the Most Highest. Secondly, she hath forsaken her own husband. Thirdly, she hath played the whore in advoutry, and gotten her children by another man. She shall be brought out of the congregation; and her children shall be looked upon. Her children shall not take root; and as for fruit, her branches shall bring forth none. A shameful report shall she leave behind her, and her dishonour shall not be put out. And they that remain shall know that there is nothing better than the fear of God, and that there is nothing sweeter than to take heed unto the commandments of the Lord. A great worship it is to follow the Lord; for long life shall be received of him."

Again, the honest married woman is satisfied and well contented with the alone company of her husband, neither doth she desire to be entangled with the love of strangers: "The whore is never satisfied, but is like as one that goeth by the way and is thirsty; even so doth she open her mouth, and drink of every next water that she may get. By every hedge she sits down, and opens her quiver against every arrow." The godly married woman cannot be enticed, neither with fair words nor with gifts, to defile her husband's bed: the whore is easily moved to all kind of dishonesty, yea, for a morsel of bread or a pot of beer. The true married woman is not ashamed to shew her face in the presence of all men: the whore lurketh in corners, and dare not appear in the company of such as be godly and honest, as our Saviour Christ saith: "All that do evil hate the light." The honest married woman hath a good name, and cometh to wealth and worship: the whore is of every man evil reported, and she is despised of men, as dung in the street; and the best end of her is extreme beggary with shame. The godly married woman maketh peace and quietness wheresoever she becometh: the whore causeth strife and dissension, and setteth men

The diversity  
between an  
honest wo-  
man and an  
whore.

Eccles. xxiii.

Eccles. xxvi.

John iii.

together by the ears. The virtuous married woman is sure always to have God her helper and aider in all her honest travails: the whore hath God ever an enemy unto her, and all that ever she goeth about cometh unto confusion, and hath no good success. The honest married woman dare with a good conscience in all her necessity and trouble call upon God, with this perfect persuasion and assured hope, that he will both hear her and help her: the whore is so confounded in her conscience, and so feebleth the hot wrath and fierce vengeance of God kindled against her for her whoredom, that she dare not once lift up her eyes unto God, but in her heart wisheth that there were no God, that she might go forth to sin freely and without punishment. The godly married woman, while she liveth in this world, is at rest and peace in her conscience with God and man, and after this life she is well assured to be heir of everlasting glory: the whore in this world is “like a raging sea, which findeth no rest;” and when she is once dead, she hath “her portion in that lake that brenneth with fire and brimstone.” Isai. lvii.  
Rev. xxi.

If a godly married woman set these things continually before her eyes, she shall easily both repel Satan and his fiery darts, and quietly repose herself in the love of her husband, according to her bounden duty.

*Father.* I allow thy sayings well, my son. Go forth now to open unto me the office and duty of an honest and godly wife toward her husband. *Son.* The third point of a virtuous matron is to look unto her house; to provide that nothing perish, decay, or be lost, through her negligence; to see that whatsoever be brought into the house by the industry, labour, and provision of her husband, be safely kept and warely bestowed; not only to command other to do things, but also to set hand to the business herself; never to be idle, but always to be well occupied; to be an example of all godliness and honesty to her household; to reprove vice sharply in her servants, and to commend virtue; not to meddle with other folks’ business abroad, but diligently to look upon her own at home; not to go unto her neighbours’ houses, to tattle and prattle after the manner of light housewives; not to be tavern-hunters; not idly and wantonly to gad abroad, seeking new customers; not to resort unto places where common plays, interludes, and pastimes be used; not to accompany herself with any light persons, but only with such as be sober, modest, grave, honest, godly, virtuous, housewifely, thrifty, of good name, well reported, &c.; and in fine, continually to remain at home in their house diligently and virtuously occupied, except urgent, weighty, and necessary causes compel her to go forth, as to go unto the church, to pray or to hear the word of God, to visit her sick neighbours or to help them, to go to the market to buy things necessary for her household, &c. Wives ought  
to look well  
to their  
houses.  
  
Note well.

*Father.* If all married women were such housewives, my son, as thou hast here pointed and set forth, many husbands should be in better case than they be at this present. For many women be of such disposition, that they can almost no more abide their own house, than an hare can away with a tabret. Whatsoever meat and drink they have at home, be it never so good, they think it as bitter as gall. And whatsoever company they have at home, although never so honest and virtuous, yet are they none other but thorns and pricks in their eyes; abroad must they. Their house is a wild cat. They shall easily find it again at their return. Set cock on the hoop. Let the devil pay the malt-man. But, my son, let me hear if ought yet remain of the wife’s duty.

*Son.* The fourth point of an honest and godly matron is patiently and quietly to bear the incommodities of her husband; to dissemble, cloke, hide, and cover the faults and vices of her husband; not to upbraid nor to cast them in his teeth; not to exasperate or sharpen her husband’s mind through her churlishness, but rather with her soft, gentle, and sober behaviour to quiet him, to pacify his anger, to mitigate his fury, and, as they use to say, to make him of a lion a lamb. So saith St Peter: “Ye wives, be in subjection to your husbands, that even they, which obey not the word, may without the word be won of the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.” Wives ought  
to forbear  
their hus-  
bands.  
  
1 Pet. iii.

This thing practised a certain virtuous woman called Monica, the mother of St Austin, with her husband. She, having such an husband as was not only of a fierce Monica,  
St Austin’s  
mother.

nature, churlish, cruel, impatient, angry, drunken, and replenished with all kind of vice, but also an heathen man, and given to idolatry, yea, and a very enemy to her religion, and to her likewise for her religion sake, did use him with such gentleness of words, and with so sweet, kind, and loving behaviour, that at the last she overcame him, brought him from rudeness and vice unto civility and virtue; and in fine, she brought him from gentility unto christianity, so that he became a Christian and a professor of godliness. And all this came to pass through her godly conversation. For when her husband was drunk, she was sober. When he was angry, she was patient. When he blowed out many furious and unseemly words, she either held her peace, or else gave him fair and gentle language. When he in his manners was more like a brute beast than a man, she shined in her house as a mirror of virtue, in whom there appeared nothing but true godliness. Moreover, this was also her property, not to fall at words with her husband in his anger or drunkenness, or to upbraid him by it in the presence of other, but to conceal and hide his fault at all times, so much as lay in her power; and, when his fury and drunkenness was past, to warn him of it by sweet words, and gently to exhort him unto better things. Thus did she not only through her virtuous behaviour win her husband from vice to virtue, from wickedness to godliness, from gentility to christianity, yea, from hell to heaven, but also she became a noble example of most noble virtues to other women and a good counsel-giver; inso-much that, when a certain woman complained to her of her husband's churlishness, and of his cruel handling of her, she very modestly and soberly answered and said unto her: "I fear much lest your husbands be so bitter, sharp, and churlish against you, not so much of their own crooked nature, as through your own fault. For I doubt not but, if you would sometime give place to your husbands in their anger, and bear with them in their drunkenness, and conceal and hide their faults at a time, rather than fall out with them, and upbraid them by their wicked life, ye should have more gentle and more profitable husbands than ye now have; and all this cometh to pass because of your rashness and lack of sobriety, forasmuch as ye bear not with your husbands sometime, when ye see them out of the way, and wait your time, when ye may conveniently admonish them of their vices and faults, yea, and that gently and lovingly, that they may perceive that your admonitions and counsels proceed not from an hateful and evil will, but rather of a loving and well-desiring mind toward them. For I myself also had sometime a churlish and a froward husband; but by entreating him gently, by bearing with him patiently, and by giving him sweet words and wholesome exhortations, I brought him from that rude behaviour, and converted him unto the christian faith; so that now he is become a true professor of godliness, and a profitable citizen of the christian public weal."

*Father.* O most worthy and noble matron! O most goodly spectacle for all women to behold! O most godly example to be followed!

*Son.* If all women would address themselves unto the practice of this godly act<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> The substance of what is here stated may be found as follows: *Educata itaque pudice ac sobrie, potiusque a te subdita parentibus, quam a parentibus tibi, ubi plenis annis nubilis facta est, tradita viro servivit veluti Domino, et sategit eum lucrari tibi, loquens te illi moribus suis, quibus eam pulcrum faciebas, et reverenter amabilem atque mirabilem viro. Ita autem toleravit cubilis injurias, ut nullam de hac re cum marito haberet umquam simultatem. Expectabat enim misericordiam tuam super eum, ut in te credens castificaretur. Erat vero ille præterea sicut benevolentia præcipuus, ita ira fervidus. Sed noverat hæc non resistere irato viro, non tantum facto, sed ne verbo quidem. Jam vero refracto et quieto, cum opportunum videret, rationem facti sui reddebat, si forte ille inconsideratius commotus fuerat. Denique cum matronæ multæ, quarum viri mansuetiores erant, plagarum vestigia etiam dehonesta facie gererent, inter amica colloquia illæ arguebant mari-*

*torum vitam, hæc earum linguam, veluti per jocum graviter admonens, ex quo illas tabulas quæ matrimoniales vocantur, recitari audissent, tamquam instrumenta, quibus ancillæ factæ essent, deputare debuisse; proinde memores conditionis, superbire adversus dominos non oportere. Cumque mirarentur illæ, scientes quam ferocem conjugem sustineret, numquam fuisse auditum, aut aliquo indicio claruisse, quod Patricius ceciderit uxorem, aut quod a se invicem vel unum diem domestica lite dissenserint, et causam familiariter quærent, docebat illa institutum suum, quod supra memoravi. Quæ observabant, expertæ gratulabantur: quæ non observabant, subjectæ vexabantur..... Denique etiam virum suum jam in extrema vita temporali ejus lucrata est tibi, nec in eo jam fideli planxit, quod in nondum fideli toleraverat.—August. Op. Par. 1679—1700. Confess. Lib. ix. 19, 22. Tom. I. cols. 164, 5.]*

[<sup>2</sup> Act. Qu. art?]

of this most godly matron Monica, and use the like gentleness and sober behaviour toward their husbands, more love, peace, amity, quietness, and concord, should be found among married folk than is at this present day. But some women are more like the furies of hell than Monica, St Austin's mother. For their whole delight and pleasure is to scold, to brawl, to chide, and to be out of quiet with their husbands; so far is it off that with their godly conversation and gentle behaviour they go about to maintain amity and concord in their houses. And when they are re-proved for their misdemeanour toward their husbands, they shame not to answer: 'A woman hath none other weapon but her tongue, which she must needs put in practice. They have been made dolts and fools long enough: it is now high time to take hart of grease<sup>3</sup> unto them. There is no worm so vile, but if it be trodden upon it will turn again, &c.'

*Father.* These furies are far unlike the godly ancient matrons which are commended to us in the holy scriptures and in other histories; and yet will they be called and counted Christians, being indeed worse than the pagans' wives in their behaviour. *Son.* Of such women speaketh the wise man on this manner: "It is better to dwell in a wilderness, than with a chiding and an angry woman." Again: "It is better to sit in a corner under the roof, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." Jesus, the son of Sirach, also saith: "There is not a more wicked head, than the head of the serpent; and there is no wrath above the wrath of a woman. I will rather dwell with a lion and a dragon, than to keep house with a wicked wife. The wickedness of a woman changeth her face: she shall muzzle her countenance, as it were a bear, and as a sack shall she shew it among the neighbours. Her husband is brought to shame among his neighbours; and when he heareth it, it maketh him to sigh. All wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman: the portion of the ungodly shall fall upon her. Like as to climb upon a sandy way is to the feet of the aged, even so is a wife full of words to a still quiet man. The wrath of a woman is dishonour and great confusion. If a woman get the mastery, then is she contrary to her husband. A wicked wife maketh a sorry heart, an heavy countenance, and a dead wound. Weak hands and feeble knees is a woman, that her husband is not the better for. Of the woman came the beginning of sin; and through her all we are dead. Give thy water no passage, no not a little; neither give a wicked woman her will. If she walk not after thy hand, she shall confound thee in the sight of thine enemies. Cut her off then from thy flesh, that she do not alway abuse thee." Prov. xxi.  
Prov. xxv.  
Eccles. xxv.

*Father.* God give all wives grace so to behave themselves, as it becometh women that profess godliness!

*Father.* Where is that commanded in the word of God? *Son.* St Paul hath these words: "I will that women array themselves in comely apparel, with shamefacedness and discreet behaviour; not with broided hair, either gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, as becometh women that profess godliness, through good works." Here-to agreeth St Peter: "Women's apparel," saith he, "shall not be outward, with broided hair and hanging on of gold, either in putting on gorgeous apparel; but let the hid man, which is in the heart, be without all corruption, so that the spirit be at rest and quiet; which spirit before God is a thing much set by. For after this manner, in the old time, did the holy women which trusted in God tire themselves, and were obedient to their husbands, even as Sara obeyed Abraham, and called him lord; whose daughters ye are, so long as ye do well." 1 Tim. ii.  
1 Pet. iii.

*Father.* Why doth the Holy Ghost give so strait a charge concerning women's apparel? *Son.* The Spirit of God knoweth right well the vanity that lurketh in women's hearts, and how desirous they are of vain things, but special of gorgeous apparel and precious jewels. Therefore, to restrain them from this vanity, and to keep them in a comely order concerning their apparel, such godly lessons are left unto us by the holy apostles, which both wrote and spake as the Holy Ghost taught

[<sup>3</sup> A "hart of grease" means a fat one: hence, into Greece. See Nares's Glossary, v. Greece, and one of spirit. It is sometimes corrupted in old writers the ballad there quoted.]

them. And notwithstanding, who seeth not in this our age how little this commandment of God is regarded of a number of vain women, which are so addict unto vanity, that they little esteem what either God or man commandeth, so that they may satisfy their vain desire and carnal lusts?

*Father.* Why, is it not lawful for women to be honestly apparelled? *Son.* Honestly, but not sumptuously; cleanly, but not vainly. It is the part of an heathenish woman, and not of a christian matron, to be decked and trimmed like a mare-lady<sup>1</sup>, or the queen of a game. And to say the truth, it is much to be feared that that woman, which so trimmeth and setteth forth herself, passing her degree and estate in costly apparel, keep herself within the bounds of honesty. If she seek only to please her husband with her apparel (which is the duty of every honest woman), what need she then to set out herself, as it were to sell, so minion-like when she goeth abroad? Is this to please her husband, which is at home, or rather to stir up the lusts of other toward her, which are abroad? For who doubteth but that many women, thus disguising themselves, wound the hearts of many, infect the eyes of many, and give also occasions of much evil to many? A measure therefore ought to be kept in their apparel. Neither ought any woman to go apparelled otherwise than their degree and estate require: the prince's wife according to her degree, being a prince's wife; and so forth orderly even to the poor husbandman's wife, that all things may be comely done and in order, as the apostle saith: "For God is the author of peace, and not of confusion." And whether the women be of high or low degree, nobly apparelled or otherwise, let none of them all glory in their apparel, according to this commandment of the wise man, "Never rejoice thou in thine apparel;" but even those that are most sumptuously arrayed, let them be like-minded to that most virtuous and godly queen Hesther, which in her prayer made unto God confesseth that she hated the token of pre-eminence and worship which she bare upon her head what time she must shew herself and be seen, and abhorred it like an unclean cloth; again, that she did not wear it when she was quiet and alone by herself. "If we have to eat and drink," saith St Paul, "and wherewith we may be covered (he saith not, wherewith we may be gorgeously, gallantly, sumptuously, and finely apparelled), let us be content." "For nothing brought we into the world, neither shall we carry anything out of it." Let the godly matrons therefore be content with honest and comely apparel, every one according to their degree, without any gorgeusness or niceness, always remembering that clothes were first of all provided of God to cover our filthy, shameful, and miserable nakedness, and not to deck and trim us like peacocks: and above all things let them provide that the inward man be decked and garnished with all kind of godly and goodly virtues, which may brast out into godliness of life, that by this means they may shew themselves to be such women as profess godliness, and also garnish the doctrine of our Saviour Christ Jesu through their good works, and glorify the most glorious name of the Lord our God.

*Father.* God give all women, and us likewise, grace so to do! *Son.* Amen.

Now followeth in order the duty of parents, or fathers and mothers, toward their children: will it please you to hear that also?

*Father.* Yea, most gladly, my dear son.

## OF THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN.

*Son.* In the office and duty of parents toward their children, many things are to be considered.

First of all, whosoever intendeth to have good, godly, and virtuous children, and the continuance of them and of their posterity upon the earth, it is necessary that he be wary and circumspect in choosing his wife, and also in ordering his own life. And

The man ought to be circumspect in choosing his wife.

[<sup>1</sup> Mare-lady: perhaps Mayer-lady, or May-lady, the "mare" in the harvest-home festivals; for which queen of the May. Unless it be rather an allusion to see Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, Vol. I.]

forasmuch as the man is the principal part, it shall be expedient that he himself live in the fear of God, and garnish his life with all kind of godly virtues, that he may be an ensample of godliness and honesty to so many as are under him. And as the man shall dispose and give himself wholly to virtuous and godly exercises, that he may please God, and procure God's blessing in time to come, not only to himself, but also to his wife, whom he intendeth to marry in the fear of the Lord, and likewise to his children, which he trusteth to receive of the liberality of God, as tokens and pledges of God's dear love and singular good will toward him; so in like manner shall he, in choosing a wife, of whom through the blessing of God he may receive children, use a discretion, and take heed whom he take unto him to be his wife; and in this behalf not to respect (as the manner of the world is) riches, beauty, favour, nobility, friendship, &c., but rather the godly qualities of the mind, the honesty of her parentage, her virtuous bringing up, her housewifeliness, and ready disposition to do good. This thing greatly considered the holy ancient fathers in times past, both in their own marriages, and also in the marriages of their children. To obtain godly and virtuous wives for their children, they sent into far countries, not so greatly respecting the riches as the godliness of the maid. For it is diligently to be considered whom a man shall take to wife, by whom he looketh to have children. Every tree bringeth forth fruit like unto itself, according to the common proverb: "Of an evil crow cometh an evil egg." He that chooseth such one to be his wife as cometh of wicked parents, have been wickedly brought up, and is wicked herself, void of all fear, faith, love, and knowledge of God, destitute of virtue, full of vice, &c.; what children are to be looked for of such a monster of wickedness, but monstrous and wicked children, like to their mother? And what good thing can come unto them from God? Or who dare promise to himself long posterity of such fruit? It shall therefore be meet and convenient for him that will marry in the Lord, and have children in whom he may delight, and of whom he may hope good things, to choose him such a wife as unfeignedly feareth God, and bendeth herself to live according to her profession, and afterward crave of God to have children by her. That fruit wherewith God shall bless those married folk, so coupled together in the fear of the Lord, shall surely take root and prosper, as it is written: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he hath great delight in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the faithful shall be blessed."

Gen. xxiv.  
Gen. xxviii.

Psal. cxii.

Secondly, when God hath blessed christian parents with children, the father shall provide that the infants in convenient time and place be consecrated to God by holy baptism, and offered to God by fervent prayer; at the which time and place it is the duty of a godly father to be present, and diligently to note what is there promised for the children, both by him and by other, that he may train and bring them up according to the vow and promise there made.

The father ought to be present at the baptism of his children.

Thirdly, it is the duty of a good and natural mother not to put forth her children to other women to be nourished, fostered, and brought up with strange milk, except very necessity compel her; but to nurse them herself, yea, and that with her own milk. For to what end hath God given her milk in her breast, but that she with the same milk should nourish and bring up her children? If God hath created nothing in vain, then hath he not given that milk into the mother's breast without cause; verily to nourish and to bring up her infants. Those mothers therefore, which, either of niceness or for ease, put out their children from them to other, when they themselves have abundance of milk, and might well bring them up, if they would take the pain; as they be but half mothers indeed, so likewise do they greatly offend God, and corrupt the nature of the infants. They offend God, in that they resist his ordinance and workmanship by putting away their milk, and by the refusing the labour of nursing their children, which God as a penance hath laid upon them. They corrupt also the nature of the infants, in that they be fostered and brought up not of their mothers, but of strange women; not with the natural, but unnatural milk. And by this means it many times comes to pass, that children, being brought forth of gentle and godly parents, prove churlish and wicked, and utterly estranged from the nature and good disposition of the parents. For children, by drinking in strange milk, drink in also

Mothers ought to nurse their own children.

strange manners and another nature. Therefore, as it is the duty of a good and natural mother to nurse her child herself, yea, and that with her own milk; so likewise is it the part of a true father to provide that his wife, having abundance of milk, do not refuse the labour of fostering her infant, according to the work and commandment of God, knowing that in so doing she shall greatly please God, and satisfy the office of a true and natural mother.

*Father.* The holy scripture declareth that the ancient godly matrons of the old testament nursed their children themselves. So likewise did the mother of Christ, Mary the virgin. *Son.* Yea, and all godly women, from the beginning unto this day for the most part, a few nicelings excepted, which are born to do no good, but only to consume idly the good fruits of the earth.

*Father.* In divers countries, where I have travelled in times past, I have known and proved, that those women which are most noble, and of most excellent parentage, and of greatest renown, and of highest authority, do not put forth their children abroad, but nurse them at home with their own milk, only having certain honest and godly matrons otherwise to attend upon the infants. *Son.* A custom much commendable, and worthy to be practised of all godly, true, and natural mothers.

*Father.* Go forth, my son, and declare more of the office and duty of good parents toward their children.

*Son.* Fourthly, in the time of nursing the infants, the father and the mother must provide, that no bodily harm chance to the children, either by fire, water, overlaying, or otherwise; but that they be kept warely and diligently both by night and day. But this is chiefly the office of the mother, which ought principally to attend upon the young ones in their infancy; forasmuch as the father is occupied abroad, about the provision for his family. And it shall be necessary that the parents do many times commend their little children to God in their prayers, beseeching him for his mercy to send them his holy angel, which may attend and wait upon them, guard and preserve them from all evil, and evermore conduct them unto all goodness, that they may live, prosper, and become creatures worthy such a Creator.

*Father.* This is godly.

*Son.* Fifthly, when the little children begin to learn to speak, the parents must diligently take heed that neither they themselves nor any other by the reason of niceness or wantonness learn them to stammer, to lisp, and to pronounce their words by halves; but let them teach their young ones to speak plainly and distinctly, and to utter every word and syllable truly and perfectly. For many in their youth learn such unapt manner of speaking and pronouncing their words, that when they come to age they cannot leave it. So soon as the children be able to speak plainly, let them even from their cradles be taught to utter not vain, foolish, and wanton, but grave, sober, and godly words; as, God, Jesus Christ, faith, love, hope, patience, goodness, peace, &c. And when they be able to pronounce whole sentences, let the parents teach their children such sentences as may kindle in them a love toward virtue, and an hatred against vice and sin; as for an ensample: God alone saveth me. Christ by his death hath redeemed me. The Holy Ghost sanctifieth me. There is one God. Christ alone is our Mediator and Advocate. The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. There is no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesu, which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Depart from evil, and do good. Seek peace. Pray without ceasing. Be thankful in all things. Be swift to hear, and slow to speak. Walk in love, as Christ hath loved us. Trust in God, and work that is good. Flee idleness. Spend thy time fruitfully. Be humble and lowly; for such doth God love. Abhor pride; for God is an enemy to the proud. Learn to die, &c.

After these and such like godly sentences drunken in of the young ones, it shall be profitable to teach them the Lord's prayer, the articles of the christian faith, and the ten commandments, with such other wholesome doctrine, as is contained in the catechism, or principles of christian religion; that even from their very young and tender age they may learn to drink in godliness. It is also the duty of faithful parents to teach their children to say grace both at dinner and supper, that they may learn to know of whom they have all good things both for soul and body, and to be thankful

for them. In these and such like godly exercises the parents must daily and diligently train up their youth, that they, being thus acquainted with virtue from the beginning, may the more easily for ever after abstain from all sin and vice.

*Father.* If parents would labour thus to bring up their children, virtue should soon increase, and vice decrease.

*Son.* Sixthly, forasmuch as children be naturally given to play, and are desirous of pastimes, it shall be convenient that such pastimes and plays be devised for them as may not hurt their tender bodies, nor yet infect the mind with any lewdness. In their pastimes the parents must take heed that one of them hurt not another; again, that they use no swearing, no vain talk, nor babbling, but use a certain kind of gravity and modesty, even in the midst of all their most pleasant pastimes and merry conceits, that gravity, sobriety, and modesty may grow up with them even from the very cradles, all lightness, lewdness, and wantonness of manners utterly repelled and laid aside.

The plays  
or pastimes  
of children.

Seventhly, the parents also must take heed with whom they do accompany their young ones, both in earnest studies and in merry pastimes; for as great profit is to be gotten of company-keeping with honest and godly persons, so likewise by keeping fellowship with the wicked and naughty packs all evils are possessed. And as the company of the virtuous is to be recounted more precious than gold or pearl; even so the fellowship of the sinful and ungodly is to be eschewed, as the plague and pestilence, yea, as hell and the devil. For as the one bringeth health and salvation, so likewise the other bringeth death and damnation. With such as a man keepeth company, even such shall he himself also prove, as the psalmograph saith: "With the holy thou shalt be holy, and with a perfect man thou shalt be perfect. With the clean thou shalt be clean, and with the froward thou shalt learn frowardness." The wise man also saith: "Whoso toucheth pitch shall be defiled withal: and he that is familiar with the proud shall clothe himself with pride." Again: "Depart from the wicked; and no misfortune shall chance unto thee." Salomon also saith: "He that keepeth company with wise men shall be wise; but whoso is a companion of fools shall come to misfortune."

Of company-  
keeping for  
children.

Psal. xviii.

Eccelus. xiii.

Eccelus. vii.

Prov. xiii.

Gen. xxi.

Gen. xxviii.

Tob. iv.  
[Vulgate.]

Tob. iii.  
[Vulgate.]

1 Cor. v. vi.  
2 Cor. vi.

*Father.* The godly matron Sara, Abraham's wife, could by no means abide that her son Isaac should play and keep company with Ismael, her handmaid's son, but she drave both him and his mother out of the doors. Jacob also would not in any condition keep company with his ungodly brother Esau. Old Toby, among other most godly and wholesome admonitions, charged his son young Tobias, that he should not keep company, neither eat nor drink with the sinners. This saying of Sara, young Tobias' wife, in her prayer unto God, is so notable, that it is right well worthy to be written in letters of gold: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never had desire unto man, and that I have kept my soul clean from all uncleanly lust. I have not kept company with those that pass their time in sport, neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in light behaviour." And we are commanded in the word of God, that we should not eat nor keep company with such as be of a lewd and wicked disposition.

*Son.* Not without a cause. For, as the wise man saith: "Look what way a child tradeth in his youth, he will not depart from the same in his age." Whatsoever liquor is first of all put in a box, it will smell of the same continually. It is an hard point to leave things accustomed: for custom is another nature. Good parents therefore ought above all things to provide, that their children at all times accompany themselves with none but with such only as be honest, godly, and virtuous; lest by the company-keeping of the evil their good disposition be altered and corrupted. For, as St Paul saith: "Evil words corrupt good manners."

1 Cor. xv.

Eighthly, it is the duty of godly and christian parents to teach their children good manners, yea, and that even in their very tender age and young years, lest they prove rude and barbarous in their behaviour, and so become savage people, and unprofitable members of the christian commonweal. Let them first of all be taught, that whensoever God, Christ, or the Holy Ghost be named of them, or of other in their presence, they shew some outward reverence, either by putting off their cap, or else by bowing their knee. Again, if they be present in the time of prayer, or when the holy scripture is read or preached, or else when the holy and blessed sacraments are ministered, or when any other godly mysteries be in hand, let them

Good man-  
ners.



either kneel down or stand up, as the manner and custom of the place is, yea, and that with their caps put off. Let them also be taught to reverence their elders, to rise against them, to make courtesy unto them, to put off their caps, and to give them the way. If any man speak unto them, let them salute them again, and uncover their heads. If any man talk with them, let them stand right up, hold up their heads, and look them in the face with a modest and cheerful countenance, mixed with gravity. Let them hold their hands and feet still: let them not bite their lips, nor scratch their head, nor rub their elbows, nor pore in their ears; but, all the parts of the body being set in a comely order, let them diligently mark what is said unto them, that they may make an apt and discreet answer. Let them also be taught to behave themselves mannerly at the table, whether they do sit at it or wait and attend upon it. This also is not to be neglected, that the children be accustomed both evening and morning to humble themselves unto their parents, to kneel before them, and so with all reverence to ask them blessing, and to desire their continual favour; yea, and daily also to pray for the prosperous preservation of their parents.

*Father.* If children from their infancy were accustomed to these and such like good and virtuous manners, then should not such rudeness, grossness, and barbarousness of behaviour, nor such disobedience and unreverence to their elders, be found in them as is at this present day. For civility and comely behaviour is now-a-days so neglected, that it is almost despised. There is no reverent obedience nor obedient reverence used of the youth toward their superiors in this our age. Parents are not had in such honour and worship of the children as they ought. Mere barbarousness occupieth the hearts of all youth almost at this present.

*Son.* No marvel. For christian discipline is exiled out of the church; neither are parents so diligent in doing their office as they are bound by the commandment of God. But I will proceed with my matter.

Ninthly, when the children be come to the age of six or seven years, let the parents provide that they be sent to school, yea, and that unto such a school-master as feareth God, is learned, well-mannered, and is able with discretion to judge of the nature and capacity of the children, and so according to the same to teach, instruct, trade, rule, and govern them. But in this education and bringing up of the children in good letters this must be provided, that the children be not, after the common custom of schools, continually noused<sup>2</sup> in reading and learning heathen and pagan writers, of whom many times is drunken in more wickedness than godliness, more sin than virtue, (for the tongue may not so be filed that the mind be defiled, nor the speech so polited that the heart be polluted;) but rather that with eloquence they learn also godliness. For those schools, wherein nothing is taught but the doctrine of paganism, are more meet for the youth of the Turks and of the Saracens, and of such other miscreants and cast-aways, than for the children of the Christians. Neither can I see what great profit can come to a christian commonweal of such schools. "Vain are all they," saith the wise man, "in whom there is no knowledge of God." Yea, where there is no knowledge of God and of his holy word, there hath the soul no pleasure. "To know thee, O God, is perfect righteousness; and to know thy righteousness and truth is the root of immortality." And as our Saviour Christ saith: "This is everlasting life, to know thee to be the alone true God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." Likewise saith St Paul: "I shewed myself among you to know nothing but Jesus Christ, even him that was crucified." Without this knowledge, I mean of Christ and of his gospel, all other knowledge is not greatly profitable, yea, it rather hindereth than profiteth.

Porphyry with his logic, Aristotle with his philosophy, Homer with his poetry, Ptolomy with his astronomy, Hippocrates with his physic, &c. without the knowledge of Christ crucified, are ignorant and blind men, neither knowing or seeing any thing that is allowable before God, or is profitable for their souls' health. For "vain are all they," saith the wise man, "in whom there is no knowledge of God." Therefore godly parents must earnestly provide, that their children, going to school, do above all things learn to know God, that he is their Maker and Father, that they

[<sup>1</sup> Folio, *more.*]

[<sup>2</sup> Noused, or nuzzled, differently written: nursed.]

receive of him all good things necessary both for body and soul, and that he hath not made them to this end, that they should alway remain here, but rather that they, leaving this transitory life at his appointment, should for ever after dwell with him in his glorious kingdom, and have such joys as eye never saw the like, ear never heard the like, no tongue is able to express the like, nor no heart is able to conceive or to think the like. They must also learn to know, that all the benefits which they receive of God the Father are not given unto them for their own dignity and worthiness, for their own merits and deserts, but only for the dignity and worthiness, for the merits and deserts of our alone Mediator Christ Jesus, our alone Saviour, our alone Redeemer, our alone Peace-maker, our alone Advocate, our alone High Priest, our alone Law-fulfiller, and our alone Righteousness; for whose sake God the Father is well pleased with us, so that through him we obtain all good things both worldly and heavenly of our most dear Father; so that now we are become the sons and heirs of God, and heirs annexed with Christ Jesus of everlasting life. Rom. vii.

Moreover, they must be taught that, for this most loving kindness of their heavenly Father toward them for Jesus Christ's sake, they labour to the uttermost of their power to please God, to fear God, to love God, to believe in God, to call on the glorious name of God by fervent prayer in all their necessities, to be thankful to God for all his benefits, to walk worthy of their profession, to lead a new life, to become new creatures, to be fruitful in doing good works, to live according to their vocation and calling, to shine as mirrors of virtue, and in fine, to be such as shall resemble their heavenly Father and their elder brother Christ in all their life and conversation, as it is written: "He that saith he dwelleth in Christ ought to walk as Christ hath walked." For we are "delivered from the power of our enemies" to this end, that we should "serve the Lord our God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life." And Christ hath "purged our conscience from dead works," saith St Paul, "to serve the living God." 1 John ii.  
Luke i.  
Heb. ix.

Furthermore, that the children may learn these things the more commodiously, it is the duty of parents to prepare for them, not idle and wanton, not vain and trifling books, but wholesome, holy, and godly books, as the new testament of our Saviour Christ Jesu, the parables of Salomon, the book of Jesus the son of Sirach, and such like, that they may be trained and brought up in them, and by this means drink in the knowledge of godliness from their young and tender years. Books for children.

It shall profit also very much unto true godliness, that the children be brought unto the church to hear the godly psalms, prayers, and chapters that be there read, but specially to hear the sermons and preachings of God's word; and, when they come home, to require of them an accompts of such things as they have heard in the church, but namely concerning the sermon. If they can well call the doctrine of the preacher to remembrance, and make true report thereof, let then the parents praise and commend them, that by this means the children may be encouraged to continue, yea, to increase in well-doing. For, as the common saying is, "virtue praised increaseth." But if the parents shall find them negligent in this behalf, let them be rebuked, yet not too sharply, and exhorted to do better, and to give more diligence hereafter.

It shall also help greatly forward unto the increase of true godliness, if the parents take this order with their children, that whensoever they come home from school unto dinner or supper, so soon as they themselves be set down at the table, and grace said, one of their children read a chapter of the old or new testament, the other giving good ear thereunto; and, the chapter once done, reverently to talk of the same, that such as be present may be edified, as St Paul saith: "Let no filthy communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to edify withal, as oft as need is; that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Again: "Let your speech be always well savoured and powdered with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Chapters of the bible read at dinner and supper of the children.  
Eph. iv.  
Col. iv.

*Father.* Is it the duty of parents thus to train up their children in the knowledge of God, and of his holy word? *Son.* It is the principal office of a christian father and mother. The principal office of a christian parent is to bring up his children godly.

*Father.* Yet the common sort of parents think that they have done their duty

toward their children abundantly, if they keep them from fire and water, and from other dangers; if they cleanly apparel them; if they give them meat and drink enough; if they provide to leave them richly after their departure. *Son.* The Turks and Saracens, and the other infidels, do this also for their children. They therefore, which only make provision for the bodies of their children, and neglect their souls, are none other than Turkish and Saracen-like fathers; and in this behalf no better than the brute beasts, which also provide for the bodily conservation of their young ones. But it is required of christian parents, yea, and that most chiefly, that they study also for the health and wealth, for the conservation and preservation of the souls of their children; forasmuch as they know that their children are appointed of God after this life to be the citizens of heaven, and there to remain for ever and ever in glory. Neither is it with christian men's children as it is with the younglings of brute beasts, whose bodies being once dissolved, there remain no part of them unperished. But when the bodies of the children return again unto the earth, their souls are taken up into the glorious kingdom of heaven through the ministry of God's angels, and there remain in joy unto the day of judgment, when their bodies by the mighty power of God shall be restored unto them; and so, their bodies and souls linked and joined together, they shall continue with their Lord God for ever after in joy and glory, worlds without end. In consideration whereof, the parents ought to provide, not only for the bodies, but also for the souls of their children, that they may be made citizens worthy of such and so glorious a city.

*Father.* I would gladly hear it proved by the word of God, that it is the duty of christian parents to see their children brought up in the knowledge of God and of his holy word. *Son.* The probation is so easy as that which is most easy. God himself gave this commandment to all parents: "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, that thou forget not the things which thine eyes have seen, and that they depart not out of thine heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." Again: "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt shew them unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou art at home in thine house, and as thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand. And they shall be warning between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." The psalmo-graph also saith: "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will declare hard sentences of old; which we have heard and known, and such as our fathers have told us; that we should not hide them from the children of the generations to come; but to shew the honour of the Lord, his might, and wonderful works that he hath done. He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law, which he commanded our fathers to teach their children, that their posterity might know it, and the children which were yet unborn; to the intent that, when they came up, they might shew their children the same; that they might put their trust in God, and not to forget the works of God, but to keep his commandments." And king Ezechias, in his thanksgiving unto God, saith: "The father shall declare thy truth to his children." The wise man also saith: "If thou have sons, bring them up in nurture and learning, and hold them in awe from their youth up." Again: "He that teacheth his son shall have joy in him, and need not to be ashamed of him among his acquaintance." Likewise saith St Paul: "Ye fathers, move not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the doctrine and information of the Lord."

All these sentences of the holy scripture declare manifestly that parents are bound by the commandment of God, and as they will avoid the danger of everlasting damnation, to teach their children the law of God and the true worshipping of him, that they, in their young years drinking in the knowledge of God's most holy will, may learn to serve their Lord God "in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life." And according to these commandments of God, all good and godly parents from the beginning have travailed from time to time to bring up their children, as we have divers examples in the holy scripture.

*Father.* Recite to me part of them. *Son.* Abraham, which in the holy scripture is called "the father of the faithful", brought up his children both godly and virtuously,

Deut. iv.

Deut. vi.

Psal. lxxviii.

Isai. xxxviii.

Ecclus. vii.

Ecclus. xxx.

Eph. vi.

Luke i.

Examples of  
the godly  
bringing up  
of youth.  
Rom. iv.

and taught them the law of God, as he himself had learned of the Holy Ghost; as these words do manifestly declare: "Shall I hide from Abraham," saith God, "the thing which I intend to do; seeing that Abraham shall be a great and a mighty people, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? I know this also, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, and do after right and conscience." And as Abraham trained up his children in godliness and virtue, so likewise did all the other godly patriarchs that succeeded him from time to time. Gen. xviii.

How diligent king David was in the godly bringing up of his children, and specially of Salomon, that he might worthily succeed him in his prince-like estate, as many other, so likewise these words which he spake to Salomon lying on his death [bed] do sufficiently shew: "Behold," saith he, "I must walk by the way of all the world; nevertheless, be strong and quit thyself manfully, and see thou keep the appointment of the Lord thy God, that thou walk in his ways, and keep his commandments, ordinances, laws, and testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses," &c. 1 Kings ii.

The travail of the godly ancient father Tobias, in bringing up his son in the fear and knowledge of God even from his infancy, is more known to such as read the holy histories than it need here to be rehearsed. His exhortations are such, that they are worthy at all times to be remembered of all men, specially of youth. Tob. i. [Vulgate.] Tob. iv.

That godly and virtuous lady Susanna, having righteous parents, was brought up by them from her very cradles in the law of Moses, and taught to fear the Lord her God. Hist. Sus.

Blessed Luke, in the chronicle of the apostles' acts, maketh mention of the four daughters of Philip the evangelist, which did prophesy; that is to say, they were so godly brought up in the knowledge of God's most blessed law, that they were able to declare and expound the holy scriptures and mysteries of God, according to this prophecy: "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Read we not also that blessed St Paul doth greatly commend bishop Timothy, because he had "known the holy scriptures even of a child?" Acts xxi. Joel ii. Acts ii. 2 Tim. iii.

These and divers other like histories shew evidently that all godly parents, from time to time in all ages, have been diligent according to the commandment of God to bring up their children in the knowledge of God's most holy word, yea, and that from their very cradles and tender infancy; so that whosoever will do the part of a good and godly father, may not only make provision for the wealth of the bodies, but also for the health of the souls of his children, which cannot be brought to pass without the knowledge of God's word. Yea, more blessed and happy is that child, to whom his father hath procured the knowledge of God and of his holy word, with other virtues and good sciences, than that son to whom his father departing leaveth a thousand pounds by the year. For the possessions of the one are constant and immortal: the possessions of the other are inconstant, transitory, and subject to the vanity of frowning fortune.

Moreover, St Paul saith: "Exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, as a thing which hath promises of the life that is now, and of the life to come. This is a sure saying, and by all means worthy to be allowed." Our Saviour Christ saith also: "First of all seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof; and all these things (he meaneth necessities for the sustentation of the life) shall be cast unto you." Likewise saith the psalmograph: "I have been young, and now I am waxen old; and yet never saw I righteous man forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread on the earth." 1 Tim. iv. Matt. vi. Psal. xxxvii.

*Father.* I see now right well, that the office of a godly father is to see that his children be virtuously brought up and in the knowledge of God's most holy word. But let me ask thee one question. What if, the father doing his duty, the children be negligent and will not learn; or if they learn, they will not frame their life according to their knowledge; may not the father with a good conscience correct those children? *Son.* Yes, most lawfully. For moderate correction is as necessary for children as meat and drink. "He that spareth the rod," saith Salomon, "hateth Parents ought to correct their children, if they do amiss. Prov. xiii.

Prov. xxii. his son; but whoso loveth him chasteneth him betimes." "Foolishness sticketh in the heart of the lad; but the rod of correction shall drive it away." "Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die thereof. If thou smite him with the rod, thou shalt deliver his soul from hell." "The rod and correction minister wisdom; but if a child be not looked to, he bringeth his mother to shame." "Nurture thy son with correction, and thou shalt be at rest; yea, he shall do thee good at the heart." Jesus, the son of Sirach, also saith: "If thou have sons, bring them up in nurture and learning, and hold them in awe from their youth up. If thou have daughters, keep their body, and shew not thy face cheerful toward them." Again he saith: "Whoso loveth his child holdeth him still under correction, that he may have joy of him afterward. He that teacheth his son shall have joy in him, and need not to be ashamed of him among his acquaintance. Whoso informeth and teacheth his son grieveth the enemy, and before his friends he may have joy of him. Though the father die, yet is he as though he were not dead; for he hath left one behind him that is like him. In his life he saw him, and had joy in him, and was not sorry in his death, neither was he ashamed before his enemies; for he left behind him an avenger against his enemies, and a good doer unto his friends. He that chasteneth his child bindeth the wounds together, that his heart may fear every word. An untamed horse will be hard; and a wanton child will be wilful. If thou bring up thy son delicately, he shall make thee afraid; and if thou play with him, he shall bring thee to heaviness. Laugh not with him, lest thou weep with him also, and lest thy teeth be set on edge at the last. Give him no liberty in his youth, and excuse not his folly. Bow down his neck while he is young: hit him on the sides while he is yet but a child, lest he wax stubborn, and give no more force of thee; and so shalt thou have heaviness of soul."

Deut. xxi. Moreover, who knoweth not that God in the law of Moses commanded, that the children which were stubborn and disobedient to their parents should be stoned unto death? To whom also is it unknown unto what miserable end the priest Hely came, because he brought up his children dissolutely, and corrected them not<sup>1</sup>...forward, and brake his neck? Perished not his sons also in battle? Again, did not Adonia the [1 Kings i. 6.] son of Hagith exalt himself, and said, "I will be king?" "And his father would not displease him in any condition, nor said so much to him as, Why doest thou so?" What was the end of him? was he not slain? Fathers therefore ought not to be slothful nor negligent in the correction of their children, when they see them do amiss, lest the vengeance of God fall both upon them and upon their children.

*Father.* Notwithstanding, the correction ought to be gentle and favourable. *Son.* According to the fault, and also according to the nature of the child that offendeth. If the fault be little, correction by word is sufficient, or else little punishment. But if the fault be great, let correction be done according to the fault. Some children also be brought as soon to amendment by words as by stripes. But this is to be observed of all parents in all their corrections, that first of all, before they punish their children which have offended, they lay the fault openly before them, declare unto them how greatly they have offended and broken God's commandment, and exhort them from thenceforth to do better; that the children may evidently perceive that both the words and stripes, which they suffer at their parents' hands, proceed from such an heart as heartily wish and desire not their destruction, but their salvation; not their loss, but their profit. And this meaneth the apostle, when he saith: "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be of a desperate mind." The good-will of the father toward his child ought to appear and shine even in the midst of his anger, and a moderation is to be had both in words and stripes; that the wits of the children be not dulled, nor they driven to such an hatred with their parents, that they begin no more to love them as parents, but to hate them as tyrants, and hereof take an occasion to run away from them.

*Father.* As those fathers are not to be commended which are so tender over their children that they cannot abide the wind to blow upon them, nor, though they

Things to be  
observed in  
correction.

[<sup>1</sup> This sentence is imperfect. *That he fell*, or words of the like meaning, should be supplied.]

offend, once to frown upon them, or to give them a sharp word; even so are those parents greatly to be discommended which furiously rage against their children, and without consideration beat them as stock-fish. These parents are rather butchers than fathers.

*Son.* It become all parents to use a moderation in correcting their children; but now that I have answered to your question, I will go forth with the office of the parents. *Father.* Let it so be.

*Son.* Tenthly, after the children have consumed certain years in the school of godliness, virtue, and learning, it is convenient that the parents do now consider with themselves, to what kind of honest and godly exercise they will put their children, that they may be able hereafter to live as good and profitable members of the commonweal, and by their own industry and labour to get their living, yea, and to have also whereof to give unto the needy. For God hath appointed no man to be idle in this world; but every man to eat his own bread in the labour of his own hands, and to drink his own drink in the sweat of his own brows. And who knoweth not, what a sure patrimony and strong defence against the cruel darts of poverty and beggary an honest and good occupation is? according to this common proverb: *Artem quævis terra alit*; that is to say, "A man having an occupation shall be able to live wheresoever he become." Therefore shall it be wisdom for godly parents to determine with themselves betimes, how they will bestow their children, that they may be able afterward to live. If any of their children shall be found apt in time to come to be spiritual ministers in the church of God, pastors, and preachers, or to be schoolmasters, or magistrates in the public weal; then shall it be convenient, that they continue still in their studies, and be sent unto some university, where they may exercise themselves in such kind of learning as shall be most meet for that vocation which they intend afterward openly to profess unto the glory of God, and unto the profit of their country. The residue of their children let the parents appoint to some honest and virtuous occupation, that they may be able afterward truly and honestly to live of themselves; and by no means suffer them to live idly, nor to be of the number of such Sim Shakebucklers<sup>2</sup>, as in their young years fall unto serving, and in their old years fall unto beggary, if not unto worse. An honest and profitable occupation is a rich and wealthy patrimony. But in this behalf also this consideration must be had of the parents, that their children be set to such occupations as they of nature be most apt and inclined unto: so shall the science which they learn prosper the better with them, and they also shall so much the sooner come unto the knowledge and perfection of the same. For by striving against nature nothing cometh well and fortunately to pass.

Furthermore, after the children be set in such estate, that by their knowledge, industry, and labour, they be able to live of themselves, yea, and to make provision for other also, if God shall call them to be rulers of households, and the time doth now require that they give themselves to marriage, whereof also they shew themselves very desirous, that they may be fruitful in the earth, and leave seed behind them, as their ancestors tofore have done according to the commandment of God; it is the office and duty of good and godly parents to provide marriages for them, that they may marry in the Lord, and with the consent of their parents, to whom also in this behalf they are obedient, and without whose counsel and advice they ought not rashly to enterprise any thing concerning matrimony. Children in the state of matrimony ought not to follow their own blind judgment, foolish fancy, carnal appetite, sensual pleasure, &c. but the grave, sage, prudent, and wise counsel of their parents, as persons which both for their wisdom and experience know, will, and can better provide for them in this case, than they can or may provide for themselves. Those children, which of their own brain and fancy attempt marriage without the good-will and consent of their parents, do grievously offend; and seldom cometh to pass that such marriages come unto a fortunate and prosperous end. What can prosper, where fear toward God and obedience toward the parents is cast aside, and fleshly sensuality followed? If God's blessing be not present, what can have good success?

And as the duty of children is, not to entangle themselves with the bond of matri-

Gen. i.  
Parents  
ought to  
provide mar-  
riages for  
their chil-  
dren.

<sup>2</sup> Blusterers and bullies were called *swash-bucklers*, or *shake-bucklers*, from shaking their bucklers (which were used by serving-men) in a noisy threatening manner.]

mony without both the consent and counsel of their fathers and mothers; so likewise is it the office of all godly parents, understanding the desire, will, and mind of their children, to provide such yoke-fellows for them as fear God, come of an honest parentage, have been godly brought up from their infancy, love virtue, hate vice. Let them not so much respect nobility, riches, friendship, &c., after the manner of the world, as the riches of the mind, I mean honest and godly qualities. Let them in this behalf follow the holy and ancient patriarchs, which, because they would couple their children to such as feared God, sent into far countries; whereas, if they had only considered and tendered wealth, riches, promotions, nobility of blood, friendship, beauty, strength, &c., they might have been provided at home at their own doors, yea, and that with less pain and charge.

What manner of wife a father ought to provide for his son. Tob. iii. [Vulgate.]

If they be sons whom they intend to set forth in marriage, let them provide such honest, godly, and virtuous maids to be their wives, as may truly say with Sara, young Tobias' wife: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never had desire unto man, and that I have kept my soul clean from all uncleanly lust. I have not kept company with those that pass their time in sport, neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in light behaviour. Nevertheless, an husband have I consented to take, not for my pleasure, but in thy fear." Let them be no delicate minions, nor no white-fingered housewives, which can do nothing else but trick up themselves like puppets, and prick upon a clout without any gain, swift to command, but ready to do nothing, except it be to eat and drink, to keep company with some he-saint, to play at the dice and cards, to dance, to play upon a lute or upon a pair of virginals, &c.; but rather let them be such as will lay their hands to work, help to get the penny, save such things as the man bringeth in, dress meat and drink, spin and card, look to her family, nurse her own children, suffer nothing to perish, and in fine, even such one as Salomon describeth in the thirty-first chapter of his proverbs.

What manner of husband a father ought to provide for his daughter.

If they be daughters whom the parents intend to set forth in marriage, let them above all things take heed that such as shall marry their daughters be men that fear God, love his word, come of an honest stock, have been well brought up, have honest occupations to get their livings, are desirous to live with truth and honesty, abhor riot, hate dicing, carding, and such other vain pastimes, love their own houses, are careful for their families, &c. For better it is for a man to couple his daughter to such one as feareth God, although poor and base, than to a rich man without the fear of God and without the virtuous qualities of the mind, as Themistocles said: "I had rather marry my daughter to a man without money, than to money without a man."<sup>1</sup>

\* For nothing can want where God is friend: neither can any thing long prosper where God is enemy. If the parents do thus set forth their daughters to men of a good disposition, then have they done that which is the duty of honest and godly fathers and mothers, as the wise man saith: "If thou have daughters, keep their body, and shew not thy face cheerful toward them. Marry thy daughter, and so shalt thou perform a weighty matter; but give her to a man of understanding."

Eccles. vii.

But this is also seemly, that parents, giving their children to marriage, give unto them also, according to their ability, some honest portion of substance, that they may be the more able to live: which thing also shall not a little increase, maintain, and confirm love and friendship between the married folk, when they consider the liberality and free heart of the parents toward them. Notwithstanding, let them so give that they themselves lack not: for better it is that children crave of their parents, than that parents should ask of their children.

Moreover, as all these things heretofore rehearsed appertain unto the office of christian parents, and may by no means be neglected; so likewise is this also the duty of fathers and mothers, so uprightly to live, and so innocently to behave themselves in all their words and acts, that they offend not their children, nor be unto them example-givers of evil; but rather that in all their doings they shine as mirrors of virtue in the presence of their children. For, as nothing doth more profit and edify the children than the virtuous, honest, and innocent life of the parents; so likewise

Parents ought to give good example to their children in godliness of life.

[<sup>1</sup> Plut. Apophth. Valer. Max. vii. ii. Extern. 8.]

nothing corrupteth and hurteth more both the bodies and minds of the children than the wicked and naughty manners of fathers and mothers. For the children think that nothing is unlawful in them that is lawful in the parents; again, that they may boldly do that which they see their parents enterprise, use, and practise before their face. Let all parents therefore think, that fear God, that it is not sufficient for \* them to provide that their children be brought up in godliness and virtue, except they also confirm the same with their examples and manners, that their children, beholding their innocency and quiet behaviour, may study with all diligence to practise the same in their life and conversation. For, as the common proverb is, "The young cock croweth as he heareth the old." Again, "The child followeth the father." It were good for all fathers to have this saying of Christ ever before their eyes: "Who- Matt. xviii. soever doth offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Finally, this is the duty of all parents at all times, with their fervent and earnest prayers to commend their children to God, that he may preserve, keep, and govern them with his holy Spirit in his faith, fear, and love, and bless all their doings, giving good success to all their godly and honest enterprises, and so endue them with the abundance of his grace, that they, in this world serving him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life, may, after their departure from this vale of misery, enjoy the heavenly inheritance purchased not with corruptible gold and silver, but with the precious blood of that pure and undefiled Lamb Christ Jesus our Lord; to whom be glory for ever. *Father.* Amen.

Now, my child, seeing thou hast so godly and fruitfully set forth the office of parents toward their children, I also greatly desire to hear of thee on the other part the duty of children unto their parents. *Son.* It followeth next in order.

## OF THE DUTY OF CHILDREN TOWARD THEIR PARENTS.

As concerning the duty of children toward their parents, we talked of that matter in the declaration of the fifth commandment; so that it may seem now almost superfluous any more to speak of it: notwithstanding, forasmuch as the place and order requireth that we speak somewhat also now of the office and duty of children, and it is your pleasure that I should so do, I will gladly express unto you whatsoever I have to say in this behalf. *Father.* I allow thy diligence.

*Son.* The most worthy apostle St Paul describeth the office and duty of children toward their parents on this manner: "Children, obey your fathers and mothers in Eph. vi. the Lord; for that is right. Honour thy father and mother (the same is the first commandment in the promise), that thou mayest prosper, and live long on the earth." Again he saith: "Ye children, obey your fathers and mothers in all things; for that Col. iii. is well-pleasing to the Lord." Here see we, that the office and duty of children toward their parents consisteth in two things.

*Father.* What two things are they? *Son.* Honour and obedience. That child, which will do his office truly and faithfully according to the commandment of God, must both honour and obey his father and mother. Children ought to honour and to obey their parents.

*Father.* In what points doth the honour of parents consist? *Son.* First of all, in having a reverent opinion of them, of their prudence and wisdom, of their state and vocation, of their regiment and governance; being persuaded that they are our parents, not by fortune and chance, but by the singular providence and good-will of God, given unto us of God for our great commodity, profit, and wealth. Of honouring parents.

Secondly, in loving them, yea, and that not feignedly, but from the very bottom of the heart; and in wishing unto them all good things from God, as unto persons which, next unto God, have and do best deserve of us.

Thirdly, in giving them that reverence and honour outwardly, which by the commandment of God is due from children to their parents; as to bow the knee unto them, to ask them blessing, to put off their cap, to give them place, reverently and meekly



to speak unto them, and with all outward gestures to shew a reverent honour and honourable reverence toward them, as persons representing the majesty of God.

Fourthly, in labouring to the uttermost of their power to be thankful, and to requite their parents for such and so great benefits as they have received of God by them and their labours. As for an example, if their parents be aged and fallen into poverty, so that they are not able to live of themselves, nor to get their living by their own industry and labour, then ought the children, if they will truly honour their parents, to labour for them, to see unto their necessity, to provide necessities for them, and by no means, so much as in them is, to suffer them for to lack any good thing; forasmuch as their parents cared and provided for them, when they were not able to care and provide for themselves.

Fifthly and finally, in concealing, hiding, covering, and in interpreting all their parents' faults, vices, and incommunities unto the best, never objecting nor upbraiding them by any thing done amiss; but quietly and patiently to bear all things at their hands, considering that in thus doing they greatly please God, and offer unto him an acceptable sacrifice; and by no means to follow the wicked manners of the most wicked Ham, which, when Noah his father was drunken and lay uncovered<sup>1</sup> in the tent, went and told his two brethren without; but rather to practise the godly behaviour of Sem and Japhet, which, taking a garment, laid it upon their shoulders, and, coming backward, covered the nakedness<sup>2</sup> of their father, namely, their faces being turned away, lest they should see their father's nakedness<sup>2</sup>. By this means were they blessed, and Ham cursed.

It becometh a good and godly child, not to display, but to conceal the faults of his father, even as he wisheth that God should cover his own offences, as the wise man saith: "Rejoice not when thy father is reprov'd; for it is not honour unto thee, but shame. For the worship of a man's father is his own worship; and where the father is without honour, it is the dishonesty of the son. My son, make much of thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not in thy strength. For the good deed that thou shewest to thy father shall not be forgotten; and when thou thyself wantest, it shall be rewarded thee," &c.

*Father.* Wherein consisteth the obedience of a child toward his father? *Son.* In two things principally.

First, in shewing himself obedient, not feignedly, but from the very heart, to the will and commandment of his father in executing, performing, and accomplishing the same with all diligence, evermore seeking to do that which may please him, and eschewing again at all times whatsoever in any point may displease him.

*Father.* But what if the father command the child to do that thing which is contrary to the word of God? *Son.* Here the child oweth unto the father no obedience. For "we must obey God more than men." But of this matter we spake when we talked of the fifth commandment.

Secondly, in attempting no grave or weighty matter without the counsel of his father, but to desire and crave his father's advice and judgment in all things; as not to enterprise marriage without his consent, nor to entangle himself with any weighty cause without the counsel and consent of his father; always preferring his father's judgment before his own, as one of more experience, larger wisdom, and greater knowledge, yea, as one that tendereth his commodity and profit no less than his own.

*Father.* What ought to move children to shew this honour and obedience unto their parents? *Son.* First, the commandment of God, which saith: "Honour thy father and thy mother." Again: "Ye children, obey your fathers and mothers in the Lord."

Secondly, the promise which is annexed to the commandment; even this, that they which honour and obey their parents shall prosper and live long on the earth.

Thirdly, the commination or threatening of God's anger and vengeance against all disobedient children. "Whoso laugheth his father to scorn, and setteth his mother's

[<sup>1</sup> Three words are omitted.]

[<sup>2</sup> A word is substituted.]

Gen. ix.

Eccles. iii.

Of obeying  
parents.

Acts v.

Children  
ought not  
to enterprise  
marriage  
without the  
counsel and  
consent of  
their parents.

Exod. xx.

Eph. vi.  
Col. iii.

Prov. xxx.

commandment at nought," saith the wise man, "the ravens pick out his eyes in the valley, and devoured be he of the young eagles." How miserably perished Absolon 2 Sam. xviii. for his disobedience against his father! Is not the commandment of God, that such Deut. xxi. children as are stubborn and disobedient to their parents should be stoned unto death?

Fourthly, the great labours and pains which the parents take, and the infinite charges and costs which they also bestow, in bringing up of them.

These and such like things, diligently considered, shall easily move the heart of any natural and well-disposed child to shew true honour and unfeigned obedience unto his parents, and cause him to seek all means possible to gratify his parents again, and to answer kindness for kindness.

*Father.* God for his mercy work this good disposition in the hearts of all children toward their parents! *Son.* Amen.

*Father.* Go forth now, my son, to recite the offices of such degrees as remain. *Son.* Next in order followeth the office of householders or masters toward their servants.

### OF THE OFFICE OF MASTERS OR HOUSEHOLDERS TOWARD THEIR SERVANTS.

Forasmuch as every householder or master, that keepeth servants, maintaineth them unto this end, that by their labour and work things may be provided and gotten that be necessary for himself and for his family; and forasmuch as all labour and pain is taken in vain, except God blesseth the labours, and giveth good success to the travails; therefore the first and principal office of a master or householder is to bring up his servants and family in virtue and in the true knowledge of God, and to train them daily in the exercises of true godliness at certain hours appointed, that by this means God may prosper their labours and travails, and bless his household, and enrich every corner of his house, giving him abundance of all things. For "it is the blessing of the Lord that maketh men rich:" and, "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Masters ought to govern their servants godly, and to train them up in godliness. Prov. x. Psal. cxvii.

In the morning before they go unto labour, let the master of the house call all his servants together, and, meekly kneeling down upon their knees, let one in the name of them all give thanks unto our heavenly Father, that it hath pleased him of his merciful goodness to preserve and defend them that night from all evil, and to give them sweet sleep and comfortable rest; and desire him also to keep and save them that day from all perils and dangers, and graciously to prosper their labours which they intend to enterprise, and always to assist them with his holy Spirit, that they take nothing in hand, but that may be acceptable in his sight, profitable to their christian brethren, and healthful to their souls. Let the rest of the family mark diligently what is said, consent to it in their hearts, and when it is ended say, Amen. Exercises of godliness. Prayer in the morning.

Afterward, all the servants rising up again together, let them all with one voice recite the articles of the christian faith: that done, let them all fall down again upon their knees, and one of them rehearse the ten commandments of God, the residue giving ear unto them, and saying together at the end of every commandment these words: "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." And when all the commandments be ended, let them say together with one voice on this wise, lifting up their hearts, eyes, and hands unto heaven: "Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee." These things done, if convenient leisure will serve, let a chapter be read in the presence of them all, even such one as the master of the house shall think most expedient and profitable for his family.

After these things, let the master give his servants some little exhortation, to move them to live in the fear of God, to avoid sin, to embrace virtue, and in all points to frame their life according to their vocation and calling, every one in his office, doing their work so as though they did it unto God, which beholdeth all their doings, and

will reward every man according to his deeds; and so let them depart every man unto his work in the peace of God.

Prayer before dinner or supper.

When the time requires that the servants shall take their repast, whether it be breakfast, dinner, or supper; before they sit down, let them all reverently stand before the table, and one in the name of them all pray unto God to bless them and those his gifts which they shall there receive of his bounteous liberality, and so mannerly sit down together every man in his place, so behaving themselves all the time of their repast as it become the guests of God, all wanton talk, all scolding words, and all swearing utterly laid aside. Let all their communication either be of godly matters pertaining unto their salvation, or else of such things as belong unto their vocation and calling. Let them not eat and drink unto surfeiting and drunkenness, but unto the satisfaction of nature, which is content with a little; always remembering, that we live not to eat, but we eat to live. For a belly too much burdened is not meet unto labour.

Grace after meat.

Their repast taken, let one of them in the name of all say grace, and give thanks to God for his benefits so liberally bestowed upon them, and desire him to give them grace to walk worthy of his loving-kindness, that they neither in thought, word, or deed commit any thing displeasing to his divine Majesty; but unfeignedly serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. Afterward saluting one another, let them repair unto their work in the fear of God, doing that diligently that their vocation requireth.

And let this be their exercise at all times, both at breakfast, dinner, and supper. For every householder's house ought to be a school of godliness; forasmuch as every householder ought also to be a bishop in his own house, and so to oversee his family, that nothing reign in it but virtue, godliness, and honesty. After this manner did the holy patriarchs and all godly householders both of the old and new testament rule and order their families in times past; yea, and many other godly persons, as the ecclesiastical histories do manifestly shew.

And after this manner also ought every true and faithful householder to govern and rule his family and household, that God may be honoured in his house, and his holy name magnified of all the inhabitants thereof.

Moreover, the days appointed unto work godly and virtuously passed over, when the Sunday come, and such other days as are consecrate to spiritual exercises, the householder, when convenient time require, shall repair unto the church with all his family attending upon him, and there both he and his whole household earnestly pray unto God, with his most humble thanks for his benefits so bounteously bestowed upon him and his family. They shall also give good advertence to the things that be read in the church, and specially to the chapters of the holy bible. And if there be a sermon, let the householder provide, that both he and his family sit in such convenient place nigh unto the pulpit, that they may well hear the preacher, and the better note what is spoken. Again, if the holy and blessed communion be ministered that day, let both the householder and such as belong unto him, being prepared thereunto, address themselves unto the receiving thereof with all humility and worthiness. And when the householder with his company be returned home, and he is set down at the table, let him call before him all his servants that were with him at church, and require of them an accompts of those things that they have there heard. Such as can well report the sermon, and such other like godly things uttered in the church, let the master commend them; but such as be negligent and forgetful, let him exhort them to be more diligent hereafter: and so with godly and virtuous talk pass over the time, till the hour calleth again to the church, whither he and his ought with all reverence to resort, and to do such things as the worthiness of the place requireth. The evening prayer done, it shall not be unseemly for the householder to license his servants to take some honest pastime for the recreation of their wearied bodies, so that it be done with sobriety and christian modesty, all lightness and wanton toys set aside. The householder, thus training up his household in the exercises of true godliness, shall so obtain the favour of God, that all things shall right well prosper with him.

Secondly, as it is the duty of a good master or householder to provide that godliness be planted in the hearts of his servants; so is it his office likewise to see diligently that no vice take root in them. For commonly, wheresoever God buildeth a church, the devil will build a chapel just by. And wheresoever the goodman of the house sow wheat, there will the enemy also sow tares. Matt. xiii.

Therefore the householder must have a diligent and watching eye, that no vice creep into his house. But above all things, let him take heed that there be no swearing used in his house. For that offendeth God greatly, and provoketh the vengeance of God to fall upon that house where it is used, as the wise man saith: "A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with wickedness; and the plague," Eccles. xxiii. that is to say, the hot wrath and the fierce vengeance of God, "shall never go from his house." Again he saith: "The words of the swearer bringeth death. God grant that it be not found in the house of Jacob!" And the prophet Zachary saith, that he saw "a flying book," of twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad, in Zech. v. the which were contained the curses and plagues that shall fall upon the house where swearing is used. "I will bring it forth," saith the Lord of hosts, "so that it shall come to the house of the swearer, and consume it with the timber and stones thereof."

Let him also take heed that there be no whoring nor uncleanness of body, no, not so much as a filthy word used in his house; but all cleanness and purity of life, as St Paul saith: "As for fornication and all uncleanness, let it not once be named Eph. v. among you, as it becometh saints, or filthiness, or foolish talking, or jesting, which are not comely; but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, either unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Let no filthy ballads or songs of love be sung in his house, that might stir up the filthy desires of the flesh; but rather songs of the holy scripture, and the psalms of David, set forth in metre in our English tongue, very apt for that purpose. In David's psalms set forth in English metre. these things let them exercise themselves, whensoever they intend to sing, that they may rejoice in God, as St Paul saith: "Be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking unto yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks alway for all things unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. v.

Again, let him provide that there be no quarrelling, scolding, chiding, and fighting used in his house; but rather all love, charity, quietness, amity, and concord. If there chance to fall any variance betwixt the servants, let the master of the house call for them that be at debate, hear the matter quietly, declare unto them how unseemly a thing it is for the servants of one master, dwelling in one house, wearing one livery, feeding upon one table, sleeping together, &c., to fall at variance one with another, which ought to take all one part, draw all by one line, speak all one thing, love together as brethren, &c. And before they depart from their master's presence, let such reconciliation be made between them that they ask one another forgiveness, and desire the good-will one of another, and promise before their master, that they will for ever after continue in hearty friendship one toward another.

Moreover, let him take heed that there be no picking nor stealing used in his house, but all truth; no lying, but all fidelity; no dissimulation, but all simplicity; no craft and subtilty, but a plain and right-up dealing with all men; no wickedness, but godliness; no sin, but virtue; no vice, but integrity of manners; no corruption of life, but purity of conversation; that in all things they may garnish the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, as it is the duty of a master or householder to train their servants in all points of godliness, and to exercise them in all virtue and goodness; so likewise is it his duty to give a good example of virtue and godliness to his servants in life and conversation; lest that he, commanding good things, and working the contrary, destroy more by his wickedness of life than he edify with the godliness of words. Nothing maketh the men-servants so good as the goodness of the master, and nothing maketh the maid-servants so honest as the honesty of the mistress. It is a vain thing for the master to say unto his servant, "Be good ones," when he himself

is continually evil. What shall it profit a mistress to exhort her maid unto honesty, when she herself is an harlot? Let a master and a mistress be the same in their houses, that they would wish their household servants to be. For nothing doth so much allure unto godliness as good example-giving. Let masters and mistresses therefore shine in their houses as great lights, full of godliness and virtue, that their servants, seeing their good works, may take an occasion to practise the like, and to glorify our Father which is in heaven. After this sort did the holy patriarchs and all godly persons use themselves in their houses from the beginning. I would wish all householders to have these words of the psalmograph ever before their eyes, and according to the doctrine of the same to rule and govern his house.

The words are these :

Psal. ci.

1. "I will walk in my house with a perfect heart."
2. "I will take no wicked thing in hand."
3. "I hate the sins of unfaithfulness: there shall no such cleave unto me."
4. "A froward heart shall depart from me."
5. "I will not know a wicked person."
6. "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I set nought by."
7. "Whoso hath a proud look and an high stomach, I will not suffer him."
8. "Mine eyes look unto such as be faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me."
9. "Whoso leadeth a godly life, he shall be my servant."
10. "There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight."

*Father.* If all householders with their servants were such as the prince-like prophet David doth here describe, then should godliness and virtue reign in more men's hearts than they do at this present. But let me hear if ought remain of the householder's office.

*Son.* Fourthly, it is the duty of a godly householder or master not to be rigorous and hasty with their servants, but rather to be gentle and quiet with them; so that, if the servants sometime through negligence or oversight leave any thing undone, or do not things in such order as they ought to do, they quietly and patiently bear with them, exhorting them from henceforth to be more diligent and circumspect in doing their duty, and by no means like a madman fall out with them, curse, and lame them, cast dishes and pots at their heads, beat them, put them in danger of their life, &c. This becometh not christian modesty nor civil sobriety. It becometh every godly master or householder ever to set before his eyes this saying of the wise man: "Be not as a lion in thine own house, destroying the household folks, and oppressing them that are under thee." Hereto agreeth the saying of St Paul: "Ye masters, put away threatenings, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there any respect of persons with him." Again: "Masters, do unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

Eccles. iv.

Eph. vi.

Col. iv.

*Father.* Why, is it not lawful for a master to correct his servants that offend, as well by stripes as by words? *Son.* If words may do good, what need stripes? Who offendeth not sometime? If a servant be so negligent or wilful that he will not amend his fault, although many times heretofore admonished and rebuked for the same, the master may use his discretion in this behalf, and minister such moderate correction to the offender, as shall seem meet to his wisdom; this always considered, that measure be observed in all things, and that correction be ministered with discretion and favour. We be bought all with one price, and we be all inheritors of one glory. Christian men may not handle their servants as the unfaithful Turks do, which entreat their servants as bond-slaves, yea, as beasts, without any respect of manhood.


Fifthly and finally, it pertaineth unto the office of a master or householder to give unto their servants such covenants as were agreed of between them; meat, drink, lodging, apparel, wages, &c., and to put unto them such labours as are tolerable, and that they can well bear; and by no means to charge them with such burdens as they

cannot bear, nor with such pains as they are not able to suffer, nor yet to defraud them of their necessary food or rest, whereby they should be the less able to do their work. It is the duty also of a good master not only to provide that his servant shall have all things necessary for him so long as he remaineth with him, and all his covenants at his departure; but also, if he be of ability, to make some provision for him, that he may afterward be the more able to live, as the wise man saith: "Whereas thy servant Ecclus. vii. worketh truly, entreat him not evil, nor the hireling that is faithful unto thee. Love a discreet servant as thine own soul: defraud him not of his liberty, neither leave him a poor man."

*Father.* God make all masters thankful to their servants, and give them grace to consider the painful labours of their faithful servants! But, my son, as thou hast now opened unto me the office of masters or householders, so likewise declare thou now unto me the duty of servants toward their masters. *Son.* I will gladly do it, mine own dear father.

### OF THE DUTY OF SERVANTS TOWARD THEIR MASTERS.

The chief and principal point of the duty of servants consisteth in honouring and Of honour-  
obeying their masters. ing masters.

*Father.* What is it to honour the masters? *Son.* Reverently to think of them; honourably to speak of them; heartily to pray for them; stedfastly to defend their good name; and in all points so to esteem of them as of persons appointed of God to rule over them, by whom God feedeth them, clotheth them, governeth them, and teacheth them. This honour toward their masters, although never so simple and base, may the servants by no means neglect, nor deny to their rulers. For to dishonour  the master is none other thing than to dishonour God, who hath straitly commanded thee, that art a servant, to honour thy master, and to have him in reverence.

*Father.* Where is it commanded? *Son.* God, by the holy apostle St Paul, saith: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honour, 1 Tim. vi. that the name of God and his doctrine be not evil spoken of."

*Father.* Owe servants also obedience unto their masters? *Son.* Yea, verily.

*Father.* What is it to obey the masters? *Son.* Faithfully and with a good heart Of obeying  
to do that which the master commandeth, and diligently to take heed that nothing be masters. either enterprised or neglected, that may in any point offend the master; but rather to seek how to pleasure him, and to satisfy his commandment.

*Father.* Where is this obedience commanded? *Son.* St Paul saith: "Ye servants, Eph. vi. obey them that are your bodily masters with fear and trembling, even with the singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not doing service unto the eye, as they that go about to please men; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will serving the Lord, and not men; knowing this, that whatsoever good deed any man doth, the same shall he receive again of God, whether he be bond or free." Again: "Ye servants, be obedient unto them that are your bodily masters in Col. iii. all things; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as though ye did it to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doth sin shall receive for his sin. Neither is there any respect of persons with God." Once again he saith: "Exhort servants to be obedient Tit. ii. unto their own masters, and to please them in all things; not answering again; neither to be pickers; but that they shew all good faithfulness; that they may do worship to the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

*Father.* But what if the masters be unkind, churlish, and shrewd? must the servants obey them also? *Son.* So teacheth us St Peter, saying: "Servants, obey your masters 1 Pet. ii. with fear; not only if they be good and courteous, but also though they be froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, and suffer wrong undeserved. For what praise is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye

take it patiently? But and if, when ye do well, ye suffer wrong, and take it patiently, then is there thanks with God."

Masters commanding contrary to God's word are not to be obeyed.

*Father.* What if the master command their servants to do that which is contrary to the will of God? shall they obey them also in this behalf? *Son.* Nothing less; for "we must obey God more than men." But of this matter we spake in the declaration of the fifth commandment. Notwithstanding, whatsoever the master commandeth his servant to do, not being repugnant to the word of God, it ought to be done with all diligence and cheerfulness of mind; as we have Jacob for an ensample, which served Laban, his uncle and master, in keeping his flocks of sheep many years, yea, and that with great pains, as these his words declare, which he spake to his wives: "I have served your father with all my might." To Laban he also said: "Behold, these twenty years have I been with thee: thy sheep and thy goats have not been barren; and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. Whatsoever was torn of beasts, I brought it not unto thee, but made it good myself: of my hand didst thou require it, even as it that was stolen by day or night. By day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes," &c.

Gen. xxxi.

*Father.* We have few Jacobs at this present day. Such diligence and faithfulness, such labours and pains, as Jacob took, are not now-a-days found in our servants; unto such dissolution of life, stubbornness of heart, and haughtiness of mind are they come.

How servants may become good.

*Son.* It is the more to be lamented. To become right Jacobs, that is to say, faithful and painful servants, this shall help greatly; if such as serve consider with themselves, that God hath cast them into that kind of life, that God hath made them servants and subject unto other, and that therefore they ought with all diligence and faithfulness, with all labour and pain, to satisfy their masters' commandment; yea, and that not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart; forasmuch as they know that, in doing faithful service unto their masters, they serve and please God. They ought also to set this before their eyes, that if they walk truly and faithfully in their vocation, serving their bodily masters according to the will and commandment of God, they shall not escape unrewarded; if not at man's hand, yet at the hand of God, which for his promise sake will leave no good work unrewarded, as St Paul saith: "Whatsoever good deed any man doth, the same shall he receive again of God, whether he be bond or free." "God will reward every man according to his deeds; that is to say, praise, honour, and immortality to them which continue in good-doing and seek immortality. But unto them that are rebels, and do not obey the truth, but follow unrighteousness, shall come indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon the soul of every man that doth evil." How beneficial God is to those servants which truly and faithfully, diligently and painfully serve their bodily masters, the histories of Jacob and Joseph shew manifestly. Neither shall faithful and painful servants be rewarded only in this world with the abundance of all temporal things; but also in the world to come they shall "receive the reward of" heavenly "inheritance." Again, this they ought also to consider, that as they serve their masters now, so shall they be served of other, when they be householders and masters. If they be true, faithful, trusty, and diligent servants to their masters, God shall give unto them in time to come true, faithful, trusty, and diligent servants again. But if they be untrue, unfaithful, untrusty, and negligent servants to their masters, even with such shall God pay them home again. For this saying of our Saviour Christ shall for ever and ever abide true: "With what measure that ye mete withal, shall other men mete to you again." "Therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them also. For this is the law and the prophets." If servants would remember these things, it should encourage them to do their duty, and to live according to their vocation and calling.

Eph. vi.

Rom. ii.

Gen. xxxi. xli.

Col. iii.



Luke vi.

Matt. vii.

*Father.* Is there any thing behind of the servants' duty? *Son.* The chief point of their duty ye have heard. This only remaineth, that every servant, where many be in house together, do strive and labour to the uttermost of their power to excel other in virtue, godliness, honesty, and in all kind of well-doing, being certainly persuaded, that in thus doing they please God, which will abundantly acquit this their faithfulness toward their masters, both in this world and in the world to come. Let them be faithful and true to their master. Let them pick, steal, or bribe nothing from

their master. Let them study by all means possible honestly and truly to enrich their master, and not in any condition to hinder him. Let them use no lying, swearing, nor whoring in their master's house; but rather with Joseph embrace all godliness, honesty, and virtue, and in all points so behave themselves, that their master may rejoice in them, and they in their master, and God in them both. So shall it go well with all parties.

*Father.* Well said, my son. What followeth now? *Son.* The offices and duties of the chief degrees and estates we have already heard. It now remaineth that we talk somewhat of the inferior degrees, as of widows, of young men, of maids, of old men, of old women, &c.

*Father.* What sayest thou of widows and of their office?

### OF THE OFFICE OF WIDOWS.

*Son.* St Paul describeth two kinds of widows; the younger, and the elder. The office of the elder or ancient widow is to be occupied about matters of God and about businesses of the congregation, and wholly to give herself to the exercises of the spirit, as to frequent the temple in the time of prayer, to be present at the sermons, to visit the sick, to relieve the needy, to wash the feet of the saints, to be rich in good works, to continue in prayers and supplications both day and night, and to be holy both in body and mind. Such a virtuous and holy widow was that noble matron Judith, which in the higher parts of her house made herself a privy chamber, where she dwelt, being closed in with her maids. She ware a smock of hair, and fasted all the days of her life, except the sabbaths and new moons, and the solemn days that the people of Israel keep. She was a woman of a very good report with every one; for she feared the Lord greatly, and there was nobody that spake any evil word of her. Such a godly widow also was Anna, of whom St Luke writeth, that she "departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day." The office of the elder widows. 1 Tim. v. Judith viii.


As touching the younger widows, forasmuch as many of them wax wanton against Christ, and follow Satan, breaking their first faith and promise, which they made to God at their baptism (which is to abstain from all uncleanness both of body and mind, and to lead a pure and honest life), and so cast themselves into the danger of everlasting damnation; it is convenient, by the doctrine of St Paul, that they "marry again, bring forth children, guide their house" virtuously, and so live in the holy state of matrimony, that no man<sup>1</sup> may have just occasion to speak evil of them. The office of the younger widows. 1 Tim. v.

*Father.* Where writeth St Paul this? *Son.* In his first epistle to Timothy. These are his words: "The younger widows refuse. For when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry, having damnation, because they have cast away their first faith. And also they learn to go from house to house idle, yea, not idle only, but also prattlers and busy-bodies, speaking things which are not comely. I will therefore, that the younger woman marry, to bear children, to guide the house, and give none occasion to the adversary to speak evil." 1 Tim. v.

*Father.* The counsel of the holy apostle is good and necessary. For what is more convenient and meet for such widows as are ancient, old, aged, and (as they use to say) past the world, than to apply their minds unto the exercises of spiritual and heavenly things, always meditating death, and their departure from this vale of misery, wishing with St Paul to be loosened out of this mortal and wretched body, and to be with Christ? Again, what is more seemly for a young widow, which is apt to be a wife and to bring forth children, than to marry in the fear of God, and to take unto her an husband, by whom she may have children, and godly to bring them up, and to govern her household virtuously, and to do such other things as appertain unto an honest and godly wife? For how light, vain, trifling, dishonest, unhousewife-like, young widows have been in all ages, and are also at this present day, experience doth sufficiently declare. Phil. i.

[<sup>1</sup> The folio has *woman*.]



 Nothing therefore is better for young widows than to marry again, so that it be done in the Lord. By this means they shall answer to their age, live honestly with their husbands, be free from all suspicion of uncleanness, and pass over their time among their neighbours in good name and fame.

Old widows  
doat in these  
our days.

*Son.* Old widows also in this our age are not free from fault. For many of them, which by the course of nature are not only past child-bearing, but also ready to go to their grave, do so doat and are so mad in these our days, that when they ought to leave the world, they begin to think anew of the world, and when they should only meditate and consider spiritual and heavenly things, they set their mind on fleshly pleasures; insomuch that some of them, being almost fourscore years old, have been known to marry with boys of eighteen years old: another sort, being so plagued with diseases that they were not almost able to stir in their beds, have notwithstanding given themselves to marriage, being far grown in age, yea, and that unto such husbands as, the riches once past, have little esteemed their wives; but, leaving them in all misery whom they found rich and wealthy, they have entangled themselves with strange love, utterly forsaking the company of their old and toothless wives.

\* *Father.* Fruits worthy such monstrous marriages; marriages in times past hated even of the very heathen and infidels. It is good for so many as have the gift of continency to keep themselves free from marriage, that they may the more freely serve God; but specially for old women, which by the course of nature are past children-bearing: for their marriages are prodigious marriages. *Son.* You say truth. But I will go forth to recite the office and duty of young men that be unmarried.

*Father.* Let it be so, my son.

## OF THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF YOUNG MEN UNMARRIED.

*Son.* The office and duty of such young men as be unmarried consisteth chiefly in these points.

First, that they, both with their words, works, and outward gestures, do shew reverence, worship, and honour unto them that be their elders.

Lev. xix.

*Father.* Where is that commanded? *Son.* God himself saith: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoar head, and reverence the face of the old man, and dread thy God. I am the Lord."

Secondly, that they do not only outwardly reverence their elders, but also be ruled by them, ask counsel of them, and suffer themselves to be admonished and rebuked by them; being persuaded, that there is more wisdom, knowledge, understanding, learning, and experience in the elders, than in themselves, which are but young and of small practice. And therefore ought young persons to have a great delight and singular pleasure to frequent the company of such as be ancient and of good experience and wisdom, that by this means they may come by knowledge, as the wise man saith: "My son, keep company with the multitude of such elders as have understanding, and consent unto their wisdom with thine heart, that thou mayest hear all godly sermons, and that the worthy sentences escape thee not. And if thou seest a man of discreet understanding, get thee soon unto him; and let thy foot tread upon the steps of his doors." Again he saith: "Think scorn of no man in his old age; for we wax old also." "Despise not the sermons of such elders as have understanding, but acquaint thyself with the wise sentences of them; for of them thou shalt learn wisdom and the doctrine of understanding, and how to serve great men without complaint. Go not from the doctrine of the elders; for they have learned it of their fathers. For of them thou shalt learn understanding, so that thou mayest make answer in the time of need."

Eccles. vi.

Eccles. viii.

Thirdly, that they be not proud, nor stand in their own conceit, nor brag or boast themselves of such gifts as God hath endued them with; but rather that they be sober-minded, humble, meek, lovely, gentle, and ready to hear other, and also to give place unto their elders, as St Peter saith: "Ye young folk, submit yourselves unto the elders. Submit yourselves every man one to another. Knit yourselves together

1 Pet. v.

in lowliness of mind. For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." St Paul also saith: "Exhort the younger men that they be sober-minded."

Tit. ii.

Fourthly, that they be not idle, no tavern-hunters, no users of dishonest or unlawful pastimes, no pickers of quarrels, no drunkards, no keepers of evil company; but rather well occupied, content with the houses where they dwell, using honest and lawful pastimes, quiet, sober, keeping company with the godly and virtuous, and ever having God before their eyes.

Fifthly and finally, forasmuch as they intend once to marry, if God bless them with life, it is the duty of young men also to keep their bodies unpolluted, undefiled, unspotted, free and utterly estranged from all whoredom and uncleanness, that they may come with pure bodies unto the holy state of honourable wedlock; following in this behalf the godly example of the most godly young man Joseph, Jacob's son, which did rather choose to lose all his promotions and wealthy livings, yea, to be cast into prison, and there to suffer many and great miseries, than he would transgress the commandment of God and abuse his body in any kind of uncleanness, before God called him unto the blessed state of matrimony.

This example let all young men that be unmarried have continually before their eyes, and remember how graciously God dealt with Joseph afterward, how he blessed him, and made him greatest and of highest authority in all Egypt, the king only excepted. Therefore, when the devil, the world, and the flesh shall move them unto uncleanness, either to deflower maids, or to corrupt men's wives, or to defile widows, or otherwise dishonestly to behave themselves either in thought, word, and deed, let them say with Joseph: "How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?" Let them eschew idleness, vain talk, and evil company, and give themselves to prayer, and to the reading of the holy scriptures; and they shall easily avoid and escape the flattering and deceitful songs of that pleasant, but poisonous mermaid, the flesh. "Watch and pray," saith our Saviour Christ, "that ye fall not into temptation." "I have hidden up thy words in my heart," saith the psalmograph, "that I might not sin against thee."

Gen. xli.

Gen. xxxix.

Matt. xxvi.  
Psal. cxix.

*Father.* Thy counsel is good, my son. God give us all grace to follow it! But what sayest thou concerning the duty of maids and young women that be unmarried?

### OF THE DUTY OF MAIDS AND YOUNG UNMARRIED WOMEN.

*Son.* The maids, whether they be in their fathers' houses, or abroad at service, must diligently take heed, that they have continually before their eyes the fear of God, and above all things seek to please him, and to frame their life according unto his holy word. And that they may the better this do, they ought many times to call upon God for his holy Spirit and grace, that he may keep them safe and sound both in mind and body. For without his help and favour nothing can prosper or have good success: without his grace, and without the comfort of his holy Spirit, neither the bodies nor the minds of the maids can continue pure, chaste, continent, and honest, but rather fall into all kind of uncleanness. God therefore is at all times to be called upon with fervent prayers, that he may preserve and keep them in all godliness, honesty, and virtue, as we have Sara, young Tobias' wife, for an example; which, when she was a maid, gave herself busily unto prayer, insomuch that we read, that at a certain time she went up into an high chamber of her father's house, and there continued in prayer unto God by the space of three days and three nights, neither eating nor drinking in the mean time.

Tob. iii.  
[Vulgate.]

Secondly, the duty of honest and godly maids is to be obedient to their masters and mistresses, and diligently to do in the household affairs whatsoever they are commanded, and always to have an eye unto the godly doings of their mistresses, and studiously learn to do the like; that, when the time comes that they also shall be householders, they may know the better how to rule and govern their own house.

Thirdly, it appertaineth unto the office of virtuous maids never to be idle, but alway to work some good thing. For idleness is a great occasion of many evils, as

the wise man saith: "Idleness bringeth much evil." So soon as idleness occupieth the mind of any person, vain and evil thoughts brast in straightways, out of the which springeth all mischief, as pride, slothfulness, banqueting, drunkenship, whoredom, adultery, vain communication, bewraying of secrets, cursed speaking, &c. To avoid these pestilences, it shall become honest and virtuous maids to give themselves to honest and virtuous exercises, to spinning, to carding, to weaving, to sewing, to washing, to wringing, to sweeping, to scouring, to brewing, to baking, and to all kind of labours without exception, that become maids of their vocation, of whatsoever degree they be, rich or poor, noble or un noble, fair or foul. This thing shall help greatly in time to come to get their living, if need require.

Prov. xxxi. King Salomon, in the description of an honest faithful woman, saith on this manner: "She occupieth wool and flax, and laboureth gladly with her own hands. She is like a merchant's ship, that bringeth her victuals from afar. She is up in the night season, to provide meat for their household, and food for her maidens." "She layeth her fingers to the spindle; and her hand taketh hold of the distaff," &c.

Tob. ii. Thus were divers godly maids brought up in their tender years, which be mentioned in the holy scripture, and they practised the same when they were wives. Anna, old Tobias' wife, learned to weave when she was a maid; and therefore, when her husband was blind and could not work, she went daily to the weaving work: and look, what living she could get with the labour of her hands, she brought it home for the relief of her family. Hanna also, the wife of Helcana, wrought with her own hands, and made cloth, so that every year she brought a coat of the cloth that she had made to Samuel her son, when she came up with her husband to offer unto the Lord. Tabitha also is greatly commended in the holy scripture, for coats and garments that she made both for her own family and also for the poor. Again, Acts ix. Lydia, a godly and faithful woman, occupied selling of purple. Priscilla also, a virtuous woman, made tents with her husband Aquila; of the which occupation St Paul was, and laboured with them for his living.

Acts xvi. Acts xviii. Not only the divine histories, but also the ecclesiastical and other human writings minister unto us abundance of such and the like examples, which declare sufficiently that in all ages all godly women from time to time have learned and practised some art or occupation, whereby they might get at the least some part of their living, if necessity should require. And what is more brittle than brittle and flattering fortune, or more inconstant and fitting than the transitory possessions of the world? An occupation is a most certain patrimony.

Fourthly, not only idleness is to be eschewed of those maidens which intend to prove godly and virtuous, but also the running about unto vain spectacles, games, pastimes, plays, interludes, &c., where rather vice than virtue, sin than soul-health, wickedness than godliness, is to be learned. Let them remember what chanced to Dina, Gen. xxxiv. Jacob's daughter, through going abroad to see vain sights. Was she not deflowered, and lost her virginity? Virginity once lost, what remaineth safe and praise-worthy in a maid? The highest, best, and greatest dowry that a maid can bring to her husband is honesty; the which if she lack, though she might strive with king Cræsus in riches, yet is she more miserable than Irus. Let the maids therefore above all things seek to maintain their honesty, and eschew all such things as might work the corruption thereof.

Fifthly, forasmuch as nothing doth so greatly hinder the good name and fame of maids, as keeping company with naughty packs, and persons of a dissolute and wanton life (for every man proveth such as he is with whom he is conversant); and contrariwise, nothing doth so much commend, advance, and set forth their good name and fame, as resorting unto such as are well reported, and of an honest disposition; therefore shall it be requisite that all godly maids do refrain themselves from keeping company with light, vain, and wanton persons, whose delight is in fleshly and filthy pastimes, as singing, dancing, leaping, skipping, playing, kissing, whoring, &c. All such must they avoid, if they tender their good name; which once lost, they are no more of estimation, but contemned and despised of all good and godly persons. The wise man saith: "Like as the clearness of the eyes rejoiceth the heart, so doth a good

name feed the bones." Again: "A good name is more worth than great riches, and loving favour is better than silver and gold." Once again he saith: "A good name is more worth than a precious ointment." Jesus, the son of Sirach, also saith: "Labour to get thee a good name; for that shall continue surer by thee than a thousand great treasures of gold. A good life hath a number of days; but a good name endureth for ever." Prov. xxii.  
Eccles. vii.  
Eccles. xli.

Sixthly, this also must honest maids provide, that they be not full of tongue, and of much babbling, nor use many words, but as few as they may, yea, and those wisely and discreetly, soberly and modestly spoken, ever remembering this common proverb: "A maid should be seen, and not heard." Except the gravity of some matter do require that she should speak, or else an answer is to be made to such things as are demanded of her, let her keep silence. For there is nothing that doth so much commend, advance, set forth, adorn, deck, trim, and garnish a maid, as silence. And this noble virtue may the virgins learn of that most holy, pure, and glorious virgin Mary, which, when she either heard or saw any worthy and notable thing, blabbed it not out straightways to her gossips, as the manner of women is at this present day; but, being silent, she "kept all those sayings" secret, and "pondered them in her heart," saith blessed Luke. Silence in a  
maid is great-  
ly commend-  
able.  
Luke ii.

Seventhly, forasmuch as maids, no less than young men, after they once come to fourteen years of age, are so desirous to be married, and to have the company of other, to this end that they may be fruitful according to the work of God and nature; and notwithstanding such untimely marriages are not to be commended, seeing that through them the bodies of the persons so too soon married are greatly enfeebled, and the fruit that cometh of them prove weaklings, of small stature, and almost of no strength, and so unprofitable for the commonwealth; it shall be convenient for all honest maids, if they tender the health and conservation of their bodies, and the prosperity of the fruit wherewith God shall bless them afterward, and the continuance of the same, that they labour to the uttermost of their power to suppress that lust and desire in them, by moderate eating and drinking, by using a temperate diet, and by avoiding all superfluity, and by keeping their bodies low, either by fasting or by receiving of such meat and drink as shall least of all inflame the body or provoke it unto lust. It shall be necessary in this behalf, that the maids use no fine and exquisite meats, but homely and usual, even such as may slay hunger, and not kindle lust; satisfy nature, and not pamper the body. The drink also that they shall use ought either to be pure water, or else thin ale, or small beer; that it may slake thirst and not kindle lust. For nothing doth so tame the raging lusts of the flesh as slender and moderate diet; and contrariwise, nothing doth so inflame and set on fire carnal concupiscence, as fine fare and hot wines; as St Paul saith: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." Again: "Let us walk honestly, as it were in the day-light; not in eating and drinking, not in chambering and wantonness; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ: and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it." "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Our Saviour Christ saith also: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcome with surfeiting and drunkenness." If the ancient Romans did forbid their women the use of wine and delicate fare, lest by the reason thereof they might fall into any uncleanness and dishonesty, and so bring shame both to themselves, to their husbands, and to their family; how much less tolerable is it for maids to accustom themselves to such meat and drink as shall excite and stir up carnal concupiscence and fleshly lust in them, and provoke them peradventure unto lewdness and dishonesty, and so by this means they shame themselves for ever after, and dishonest their whole stock and kindred! What wicked uncleanness and unclean wickedness hath in times past brast out from delicate fare, both divine and human histories abundantly declare; neither want we experience hereof at this present day. Let the maids therefore above all things use slender, simple, and homely diet. By this means shall they keep their bodies in good tempera-  
ture, conserve their health, quiet their minds, suppress carnal lusts, avoid unclean desires, Untimely  
marriages  
hurt greatly.  
  
The diet of  
maids.  
Eph. v.  
Rom. xiii.  
Rom. viii.  
Luke xxi.

eschew evil company, and set themselves in a goodly order against the time that God shall call them unto the holy state of honourable wedlock.

Of maids' apparel.

Eighthly, seeing that, as experience teacheth, maids desire nothing so greatly as gallant apparel and sumptuous raiment, and covet that so greatly, that many times not a few of them labour to come by it, not only with the loss of their truth, but also of their honesty; it shall not be unfitting that all honest and godly-disposed maids content themselves with comely and seemly apparel, even such as becometh their degree, state, vocation, and calling, utterly rejecting and casting away all nice vanity and vain niceness of apparel, according to the doctrine of the gospel. "I will," saith St Paul, "that the women (he meaneth also maids and all of the woman-kind) array themselves in comely apparel, with shamefacedness and discreet behaviour; not with broided hair, gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, as becometh women that profess godliness, through good works." Likewise saith St Peter: "Women's apparel shall not be outward, with broided hair, and hanging on of gold, either in putting on of gorgeous apparel; but let the hid man, which is in the heart, be without all corruption, so that the spirit be at rest and quiet; which spirit is before God a thing much set by. For after this manner in the old time did the holy women, which trusted in God, tire themselves," &c.

Esth. xiv.  
[Apocrypha.]

Ester, a most noble and virtuous queen, confesseth in her prayer unto God, that she utterly abhorred and hated that prince-like and gorgeous apparel, even as an unclean cloth, which she was compelled to wear when she must shew herself to the people; and that when she was quiet and alone by herself, she did not wear it. If a princess of so noble estate, of so great dignity, and of so high pre-eminence did not gladly wear costious apparel, but wished rather to go simply apparelled, and so used when she was alone by herself; how unseemly a thing then is it for homely and base maids, for maids far inferior to her degree, so to tire themselves, so to trick and trim their bodies, as though they were mare-ladies' or puppets in a game! Vain and nice apparel becometh the daughters of the heathen, and not the children of the Christians, which profess godliness.



The lightness of apparel is a plain demonstration of the lightness of the mind; so that, whatsoever woman delight in gorgeous garments, she setteth forth herself to sale, and declareth evidently her incontinency both of body and mind. Look, how much the body is beautified with the gallantness of apparel, so much is the mind deformed with the corruption of arrogance and vain-glory. And the more humbly that the body is outwardly clad, the more humble is the mind within, and the better garnished with the riches of godly virtues. The decking and trimming of a Christian is inward, not outward: it consisteth in mind, and not in body; in virtue and godliness, and not in gold and pearl; as it is written: "The king's daughter is all glorious within."

Psal. xlv.

Note well.

Fulgentius saith: "Let the garment of an holy maid be such as may be a witness of her inward chastity. Let no gallantness be sought to set forth the outward man, lest the fashion of the inward man be deformed. The maid, that desireth the garnishing of the bodily vesture, spoileth her soul of the beauty of virtues; neither hath she true chastity that goeth about with her gallant apparel to allure the eyes of other to behold her; neither keepeth she her promise with Christ, that seeketh rather to please the people than her husband. And thus must it needs follow that she, which soweth lust to the eye of man, do reap wrath in the sight of God<sup>2</sup>." Let not the maid therefore say, when she is so gorgeously apparelled, The garment or the jewel will do no harm. I grant. Notwithstanding, by this means the malefactor and suggester of an evil will (he meaneth the devil) will enter in. St Paul saith: "We


1 Tim. vi.

[<sup>1</sup> See the note, page 346.]

[<sup>2</sup> Vestis quoque talis sit sacræ virginis, quæ testis existat intimæ castitatis: Nihil nitoris in habitu exterioris hominis quærat, ne interioris hominis habitus sordidetur. Virgo quæ ornatum corporeæ vestis affectat, animam suam virtutum splendore despoliat: nec habet castitatem veram, quæ

intuentibus parat illecebram: nec fidem servat Christo, quæ populo quærit magis placere quam sponso. Consequenter autem necesse est, ut quæ humano conspectui concupiscentiam seminat, in divino conspectu iracundiam metat. — Fulgent. Op. Venet. 1742. Ad Prob. de Virg. et Humil. Epist. iii. 22. p. 79.]

brought nothing into the world, neither can we carry any thing out of it. Having food and wherewith we may be covered (he saith not, garnished, decked, trimmed, and gallantly set out in our apparel, like May-lords and May-ladies), let us be content." All the godly from the beginning, both men, women, and maids, even so many as professed godliness, have been contented with simple and seemly apparel; being rather desirous to garnish the inward man with the beauty of virtues, than the outward man with the gallantness of fine apparel. Let all maids, therefore, that are studious of virtue, and desire rather to please God and all godly men than the world and the wicked worldlings, utterly sequester their minds from the filthy desires of vain and light apparel, and content themselves with such vestures as become maids that profess godliness, every one according to their vocation and calling; and above all things seek to garnish and trim their inward man with the godliness and beauty of virtues; that their whole life may be nothing else than a very mirror of virtue and godliness.

Finally, when the time cometh that they feel themselves apt unto marriage, and are desirous to contract matrimony, to the end that they may avoid all uncleanness, and bring forth fruit according to God's ordinance, as their parents have done before them, they must diligently take heed, that they presume not to take in hand so grave, weighty, and earnest matter, nor entangle themselves with the love of any person, before they have made their parents, tutors, friends, or such as have the governance of them, privy of their intent; yea, and also require their both counsel and consent in the matter, and by no means to stablish or appoint any thing in this behalf without the determination of their rulers. For this is part of the honour that the children owe to their parents and tutors by the commandment of God, even to be bestowed in marriage as it pleaseth the godly, prudent, and honest parents or tutors to appoint; with this persuasion, that they, for their age, wisdom, and experience, yea, and also  for the tender love, singular benevolence, and hearty good-will that they bear toward them, both know and will better provide for them than they be able to provide for themselves.

Of maids' marriages.

Children ought not to contract matrimony without the consent of their parents.

The histories of the holy bible teach evidently that the godly fathers in times past appointed the marriages of their children, and that the children attempted nothing in this behalf without the counsel, consent, determination, and appointment of their parents. And that authority, which parents at that time had over their children, have fathers and mothers also at this present. And as the children then did not take upon them to marry without the consent of their parents, no more ought they to do in this our age. The children, which presume to marry without the counsel of their parents, do greatly offend God, and are fallen away from the obedience which they owe to their parents or tutors in this behalf by the commandment of God. Let all godly maids take heed therefore that they snarl not themselves with the love of any other, nor marry with any person before they have the good-will of their parents. Let them receive no tokens of any man, nor be too much familiar with any person in the way of marriage; but if any be suitors unto them for to marry with them, and they could well be contented for their godly qualities and honesty of life to take them unto their husbands in the fear of God, let them first of all open the matter to their parents or tutors, being contented to be ruled by them, submitting their own judgment to the judgment or wisdom of their superiors, and praying also unto God that he may rule and govern the hearts of their parents on such sort, that they may appoint that thing which he knoweth to make most unto his glory, and unto the salvation of their souls. If their parents do agree unto their desire, let them thank God for it, and know that God is the author of this their marriage, and that, as he hath brought them together, so will he bless both them and their marriage, and give good success unto them in all their godly and honest attempts, so that they shall lack no good thing. But if their parents do not consent, let the children be content, and think that it is for the best, and that they see more in the matter than they themselves can perceive, being far inferior to them in age, wisdom, discretion, knowledge, reason, experience, &c. And let them think that this also cometh of God, which ruleth the hearts of their parents, and turneth them which way it pleaseth him, and all for their commodity and profit, for their health and wealth; yea, let them think that God is

their Father, and they his children; again, that he is their Creator, and they his creatures; and therefore that he will not neglect them, but so provide for them as a father for his children, and never forsake them so long as they live in the obedience of his holy word.

*Father.* Thou holdest then, that parents ought to place their children in marriage, and that children in this behalf also owe obedience unto their parents. *Son.* Yea, verily.

*Father.* Ought not the consent of the children also to be considered in this behalf no less than the authority of the parents? *Son.* God forbid else! For we read, that when Rebecca was promised that she should go with Abraham's servant to be married unto Isaac, they said: "We will call the damosel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called forth Rebecca, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? and she answered, I will go," &c. Here see we, that though the authority of the parents be great over their children, yet in the matter of marriage the consent of the children may not be neglected. For parents must so use their authority, that they do not abuse it. They abuse it, when it turneth unto the hinderance, incommodity, and destruction of their children. The parents therefore must so place their children in marriage, as may profit, and not hinder them, yea, and that with the good-will and consent of the children, to whom the matter chiefly pertain; that the authority of the parents and the consent of the children may go together, and make perfect an holy and blessed marriage.

*Father.* This is commendable. But some parents greatly abuse their authority, while they sell their children to other for to be married for worldly gain and lucre, even as the grazier selleth his oxen to the butcher to be slain, having no respect to the person, whether he be godly or ungodly, honest or dishonest, wise or foolish, &c. If money, if riches, if the muck of the world come, let the child go. The person is godly enough, honest enough, wise enough, &c., though he be never so ungodly, without all honesty, and a very fool. *Son.* These be wicked parents, and marriages thus made for the most part have never good success, as experience daily teacheth. It becometh therefore all godly and christian parents to provide for their children such mates and yoke-fellows as fear God, love his word, and will diligently provide for their family; and, such ones provided, it becometh all faithful children to obey the authority of their parents, and to take such unto them to be their companions in matrimony as their fathers and mothers have appointed, and so to live together in the fear of God, loving one another as Christ loveth the congregation.

*Father.* Thou speakest godly, my son. What followeth now? *Son.* That we speak of the office and duty of old and ancient men.

#### OF THE OFFICE OF OLD AND ANCIENT MEN.

First, those men which be ancient and grown in age ought above all things so to behave themselves, that both in their words and works they may shine as great lights among the younger folks; so that, when their inferiors in age do behold them, they may truly seem to look upon mirrors of virtue and glasses of godliness, having nothing in them that they may justly accuse and condemn, but many things that they ought of duty both to allow and to follow. And in this behalf, forasmuch as the duty of godliness is a thing most worthy to be embraced and practised of the younger sort, it shall be fitting and convenient that old and ancient men give a good example of the same in their outward behaviour, by resorting unto the sermons and preachings of God's word, by reading the holy scriptures, and by accompanying such as be lovers and avancers of God's true religion; that the younger folk, beholding this their earnest zeal toward the truth of God's most holy word, may be kindled unto the like exercises, and from their youth drink in true godliness, and so at the last wax ancient in the knowledge of God and of his Son Christ Jesu our Lord; which knowledge bringeth everlasting life. For what is more comely for old age, whose departure from

Of the consent of the children in marriage.

Gen. xxiv.

John xvii.

this world by the course of nature is at hand, than the consideration and meditation of heavenly things, and an utter sequestration of their mind from the study of earthly things, wholly reposing themselves in the delight, not of transitory and mortal pleasures, but of constant and immortal joys, contrary to the disposition of the most part of our ancients in this our age, whose property is, the longer they live the more covetous they are, and the less need they have of worldly things the more desirous they are of the same?

*Father.* Covetousness is a vice appropriated as it may seem to old men, according to this old saying: *Cum omnia vitia senescunt, sola avaritia juvenescit*: "When all vices wax old, covetousness alone waxeth young." For men of this our time, when they be come to that age that they are ready to depart out of the world, then begin they to purchase land; and when they be ready to be carried out of house into grave, then fall they to buying of houses and building of gorgeous mansions. O vain madness and mad vanity! *Son.* It is truth. And therefore, as I said before, nothing is more fitting for old age than the meditation of their hasty departure from this world, and the continual consideration of the heavenly joys.

Covetousness  
reigneth  
chiefly in  
old men.

Secondly, the duty of old and ancient men is to declare their good affection and tender zeal toward God's holy word in their talk and communication; so that their chief speaking be always of the holy scriptures, and of such things as make unto edifying, that such as be present at their communication may learn godliness, knowledge, and wisdom. They must take heed that no light and wanton words proceed out of their mouth, which may infect the ears of the hearers, and minister unto them occasion of lewdness; but let their talk be such as shall provoke unto virtue, godliness, and honesty. "God," saith the wise man, "hateth an old body that doateth and is unchaste:" not only unchaste in body, but also in words. For as many as profess Christ, specially the ancient, ought to be so far estranged from all uncleanness, that it should not once be named among them. "Let no filthy communication proceed out of your mouth," saith St Paul, "but that which is good to edify withal, as oft as need is, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Our Saviour Christ saith, that "at the day of judgment" we shall "render an account of every idle word that we have spoken." And who knoweth not that "evil words corrupt good manners?"

Eccles. xxv.

Eph. v.  
Eph. iv.

Matt. xii.

1 Cor. xv.

Thirdly, the old men ought to avoid the whole lump of sin, and utterly to cast it away from them, and so purely and innocently to live, that their life may be blameless and an example to the younger folk of all godliness and honesty, replenished with all kind of virtues, and garnished with all manner of good works. For as nothing doth more dishonour old age than wicked and corrupt life, so likewise nothing doth more beautify and garnish old age than innocency of life and godliness of conversation, as the wise man saith: "Age is an honourable thing: nevertheless it standeth not only in the length of time, nor in the multitude of years; but a man's wisdom is the grey hair, and an undefiled life is the old age." St Paul requireth of the elder men that they be "sober, sage, discreet, sound in the faith, in love, in patience."

Wisd. iv.

Tit. ii.

He would have them "sober," that is to say, no drunkards, no tavern-hunters, not given to much wine, not sitting all day at the ale-house tippling and quaffing. For old age is much given to belly-cheer, and soon falleth into drunkenness; which vice greatly disgraceth all men, but the older sort specially, whose life ought to be unspotted, and a mirror of virtue to all young folk. For drunkenness maketh of a reasonable man a brute beast, spoiling him of all his senses, so that no part of his body can do his office; and by this means is he made a vile dung-hill of Satan, to be used, yea, rather abused at his pleasure unto all sin and wickedness.


Again, he would have them "sage" and grave; that is to say, such persons as neither in countenance, gestures, words, behaviour, or apparel, should shew any point of lightness, incontinency, impudency, or whatsoever is contrary to the dignity of old age; but rather so behave themselves in all points as becometh their age, state, and vocation, unto the good example of other.

Furthermore, he requireth of them that they be "discreet;" that is to say, tempe-



rate, quiet, not rash, not uncircumspect, not furious, not doing any thing of head and without judgment; but using such temperance in all their affairs as shall become men of good consideration and gravity, and such discretion in all their enterprises as shall not be counted unworthy nor unseemly for their age; that the younger folk, beholding this their discretion and temperance, may be occasioned to follow and practise the like in all their attempts, utterly rejecting and casting away all rashness and headlong judgment.

Moreover, the holy apostle commandeth that old men be "sound in the faith;" that is to say, that they truly and constantly believe in God, embrace his holy word, continue in the same unto the end, and by no means suffer themselves to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, as the apostle saith: "Be not carried about with divers and strange learning; for it is good that the heart be stablished with grace:" that the younger sort, seeing this their constancy in God's religion, may be occasioned the rather at their example to do the like, and grow daily more and more in the knowledge of godliness, till at the last they also more wax ancient in Christ.

Item, it is required of ancient men that they be also sound "in love;" he meaneth toward their neighbour. For out of their faith toward God ought true, perfect, and unfeigned love issue toward their christian brother, yea, toward their very enemy, for God's sake; not only inwardly or with lips to love him, but also outwardly and with deeds, ready at all times to succour his necessity, and to do for him whatsoever lieth in their power, as St John saith: "Let us not love in word, nor in tongue;  but in work and truth." For he that is sound in love loveth his neighbour as himself, and is the very same to his neighbour that Christ is to him, as St John saith: "Hereby perceive we love, because he (Christ) gave his life for us; and we ought to give our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

In fine, the blessed apostle St Paul chargeth the old and ancient men that they also be sound "in patience;" that is to say, if God at any time sendeth them adversity either for the trial of their faith, or for the correction of their manners, that they grudge not against God, but patiently and thankfully bear his loving visitation, being fully persuaded that that cross which God hath laid upon them cometh not from an angry but from a loving heart, even such an heart as seeketh not their destruction, but their salvation. "For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" "If ye endure chastening," saith the apostle, "God offereth himself unto you as unto sons. But if ye be not under correction, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. For whom the Lord loveth, him he chasteneth: yea, he scourgeth every son that he receiveth." Again, if their neighbour at any time offend them either in word or deed, that they seek not straightways to be avenged of them, and to acquit evil for evil, but rather patiently and quietly to bear it at their neighbour's hand, obeying this counsel of St Paul, which saith: "If it be possible (as much as is in you), live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will reward, saith the Lord. Therefore be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with goodness." And as St Peter saith: "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an ensample, that we should follow his steps: which did no sin, neither was there guile found in his mouth: which, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed the vengeance to him that judgeth righteously." Patience is a present remedy against all evils, with the which except we be enarmed, we can neither live godly before God nor charitably before our neighbours. Patience is the bond of perfection, without the which all neighbourly love doth decay, and all quietness, both of body and mind, cease and goeth away. "Through your patience," saith our Saviour Christ, "shall ye possess your souls." And the apostle saith: "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Again: "Let us run with patience unto the battle that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the captain and finisher of our faith; which for the joy that

was set before him abode the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God."

Thus have I set forth the office and duty of old and ancient men, even as I have learned out of the word of God.

*Father.* Godly hast thou declared all things. Let me now hear what is the duty of old and ancient women. *Son.* I will do it gladly.

### OF THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF OLD AND ANCIENT WOMEN.

First, such as be godly and ancient matrons are commanded of the holy apostle St Paul, that they wear such raiment as becometh holiness. Old women for the Tit. ii. most part, if they be rich and of ability, are greatly desirous, when favour and beauty faileth them, to garnish and set forth themselves with sumptuous apparel, that by this means at the least they may commend themselves to the people, and allure their eyes unto the consideration and beholding of them, that in some part they may stick in the eyes of men, and not utterly be rejected for their wrinkled forehead and withered face: whereas they ought not to seek how they may please men by their vain and light apparel, but how they may please God by the decking and trimming of their inward man with the beautiful array of virtues; forasmuch as they know that they, being aged, cannot long continue in this world, but must shortly depart. "For 1 Pet. iii. after this manner," saith blessed Peter, "in the old time did the holy women, which trusted in God, tire themselves." Therefore the holy apostle, willing to bridle this foolish, vain, and carnal affection of trimming themselves in their old age, commandeth all sage and ancient matrons, that they, laying aside all light and girl-like apparel, array and tire themselves with such raiment as becometh the women that profess godliness.

*Father.* Not without a cause. For to what end should they go about to please the world, that are ready to go out of the world? If they be old women and married, not light apparel, but sad<sup>1</sup> raiment pleaseth a godly husband. If they be unmarried, what is more comely than to wear such array as becometh their state, profession, and age? An old woman to be decked with gallant apparel is none other thing than to daub over an old rotten tottering wall with new plastering. Therefore those women are most of all to be commended, which, considering their age, apparel themselves according to the same, all vanity and lightness laid aside. *Son.* Truth it is; but I will go forth with the office of old women, as St Paul describeth it.

Secondly, forasmuch as old age is naturally bent to much babbling, and specially such as be of the feminine kind, whom, by the judgment of all wise and learned men, silence doth rather commend than speech; St Paul, willing to restrain this their immoderate manner of talking, commandeth that the ancient women by no means do abuse their tongue, either by prating or by false accusing and evil reporting of other; but that they rather give themselves to silence, or, when they speak, so speak as it becometh women of gravity, wisdom, and knowledge, without reproach or ignominy to other, always remembering that at the day of judgment they must render an account before the high Judge Christ of "every idle word" that they have Matt. xii. spoken.

Thirdly, forasmuch as nothing doth so greatly provoke old women unto babbling, as too much drinking (for when the wine is in, the wit is out), and old women naturally love well tippling; the holy apostle commandeth that the ancient matrons shall not give themselves to much wine, but rather embrace sobriety and temperancy, being content with that that sufficeth, and not oppresseth nature. For as sobriety is the nurse of many noble virtues, so likewise drunkenness is the mother and nurse of many lewd vices. And where drunkenness taketh place, neither body nor mind doth his office. The mind is void of memory, and altogether without understanding. The body is so intoxicate and out of all order, that neither eye, tongue, hand, nor

[<sup>1</sup> Sad: grave.]

foot can do their office. And albeit that drunkenness is vile and discommendable in all creatures, yet in old women, which ought to be mistresses of sobriety and mirrors of all virtue, it is not only vile and discommendable, but also horrible and detestable. For an old woman overcome with drunkenness is made a sink of all evils. There is no sin which easily floweth not into her. There is no virtue whereof she maketh not shipwreck. In consideration whereof, the blessed apostle St Paul chargeth the old women soberly and temperately to behave themselves in their diet, that they may give good ensample to the younger women, and be the more apt to do such things as belong unto their vocation and calling; lest that they, doing the contrary, forget christian modesty and gravity, and fall unto such lewdness and lightness as is unseemly for their estate.

Fourthly and finally, forasmuch as it is not sufficient for true Christians not to do evil, except they also do good, as the psalmograph saith, "Depart from evil and do good;" therefore the holy apostle, after that he hath dissuaded the old women from vanity of apparel, from much babbling, and from drunkenness, declareth what good they ought to do, lest that they, being trees without fruit, "be hewn down and cast into the fire." And this good work that he requireth of them is that they "teach honest things."

*Father.* But St Paul in another place saith: "I suffer not a woman to teach, neither to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." *Son.* The same St Paul also, in another place, expounding what is meant by those words which you now recited, saith: "Let your women keep silence in the congregations. For it is not permitted unto them to speak, but to be under obedience, as saith the law. If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the congregation." Of these words of St Paul we learn that it is not lawful for women to teach in the congregation openly, which only appertain unto men, yea, and unto such men alone as are appointed by public authority unto the ministry: notwithstanding, women to preach and teach in their own houses, it is not only not forbidden, but also most straitly commanded. For who knoweth not that every man and every woman is a bishop in their own house, and ought to teach their family, and to bring them up in the doctrine and nurture of the Lord our God? It is therefore lawful also for old and ancient matrons to teach.

*Father.* Whom should they teach? *Son.* "Young women," saith St Paul.

*Father.* What should they teach them? *Son.* "To be sober-minded, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, housewifely, good, obedient to their husbands; that the word of God be not evil spoken of."

*Father.* I looked that thou shouldst have said unto me, that the ancient matrons should teach the young women trimly to dance, minionly to play upon the lute or virginals, cunningly to work with the needle, finely to apparel themselves, handsomely to play the serving maids, pleasantly to entertain strangers, younkers, and gentlemen, &c. *Son.* These be things of vanity, rather provoking unto lewdness than unto virtue, heretofore abhorred and hated of all modest and sober women. The works and qualities which St Paul here setteth forth, that the ancient matrons should teach the young women, are necessary works and godly qualities. Can any thing be more necessary or godly in a christian commonweal, than to bring up maids and young women virtuously, and to teach them "to be sober-minded, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, housewifely, good, obedient to their husbands?" &c.

*Father.* If all our maids and young women were thus brought up, we should not have so many idle, dishonest, and lewd women, as we have at this present day. *Son.* To bring this thing to pass, it is expedient that by public authority schools for women-children be erected and set up in every christian commonweal, and honest, sage, wise, discreet, sober, grave, and learned matrons made rulers and mistresses of the same, and that honest and liberal stipends be appointed for the said school-mistresses, which shall travail in the bringing up of young maids, that by this means they may be occasioned the more gladly and willingly to take pains. And to this end without doubt at the beginning were the monasteries of solitary women, whom we heretofore called nuns, built and set up, and endowed with possessions of our godly ancestors,

Psal. xxxiv.

Matt. iii.

1 Tim. ii.

1 Cor. xiv.

Gen. iii.

Schools for  
women-child-  
ren ought to  
be set up.

although in process of time they were greatly abused; so that they were made of christian and free schools prisons of antichrist, and, as St John saith, “habitations of devils, and holds of all foul spirits, cages of all unclean and hateful birds.” Rev. xviii.

The young maids were not enforced to wear this or that apparel; to abstain from this or that kind of meats; to sing this or that service; to say so many prayers; to shave their heads; to vow chastity; and for ever to abide in their cloister unto their dying day. But, contrariwise, they might wear what apparel they would, so that it were honest and seemly, and such as becometh maidens that profess godliness. They might freely eat all kinds of meats according to the rule of the gospel, avoiding all excess and superfluity, yea, and that at all times. Their prayers were free and without compulsion, every one praying when the Holy Ghost moved their hearts to pray; yea, and that such prayers as present necessity required, and that also not in a strange tongue, but in such language as they did right well understand. To shave their heads, and to keep such-like superstitious observances as our nuns did in times past, and yet do in the kingdom of the pope, they were not compelled. For all that they were commanded to do of their school-mistresses and governesses was nothing else than the doctrine of the gospel, and matters appertaining unto honest and civil manners; whom they most willingly obeyed. Moreover, it was lawful for them to go out of the cloister when they would, or when they were required of their friends; and also to marry when and with whom they would, so that it were in the Lord. And would God there were some consideration of this matter had among the rulers of the christian commonweal, that the young maids might be godly brought up, and learn from their cradles “to be sober-minded, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, housewifely, good, and obedient to their husbands,” according to the doctrine of St Paul!

*Father.* It is a matter most worthy to be considered. For if it be thought convenient, as it is most convenient, that schools should be erected and set up for the right education and bringing up of the youth of the male kind, why should it not also be thought convenient that schools be built for the godly institution and virtuous bringing up of the youth of the female kind? Is not the woman the creature of God so well as the man? and as dear unto God as the man? Is not the woman a necessary member of the commonweal? have not we all our beginning of her? Are not we born, nursed, and brought up of a woman? Do not the children for the most part prove even such as the mothers are of whom they come? Can the mothers bring up their children virtuously, when they themselves be void of all virtue? Can the nurses instil any goodness into the tender breasts of their nurse-children, when they themselves have learned none? Can that woman govern her house godly which knoweth not one point of godliness? Who seeth not now then, how necessary the virtuous education and bringing up of the woman-kind is? Which thing cannot be conveniently brought to pass, except schools for that purpose be appointed, and certain godly matrons ordained governesses of the same, to bring up the maids and young women in the doctrine and nurture of the Lord. And verily, in my judgment, they do no less deserve well of the christian commonweal, that found and stablish schools with honest stipends for the education and bringing up of the women-children in godliness and virtue, than they which erect and set up schools for the institution of the men-children in good letters and godly manners. 54

*Son.* It is truly said. But if it shall please you, I will go forth to recite the offices and duties of the other degrees. And forasmuch as we have now last of all talked of schools, I will first of all rehearse the duty and office of school-masters, that they also may learn how to behave themselves in their vocation and calling. *Father.* Let it so be.

#### OF THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF SCHOOL-MASTERS.

*Son.* I have heard our preacher and our catechist also many times say, that that commonweal, where a good magistrate, a faithful preacher, and a diligent school-master