

is best secured, where the matter and the words are of immediately Divine inspiration, and to us, David's Psalms seem plainly intended by those terms of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, which the Apostle useth, Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16. But it is meet that these divine compositions should be represented to us in a fit translation, lest we want David in David; while his holy ecstasies are delivered in a flat and cold expression. The translation which is now put into thy hand cometh nearest to the original of any that we have seen, and runneth with such a fluent sweetness, that we thought it fit to recommend it to thy Christian acceptance, some of us having used it already with great comfort and satisfaction:—

John Owen, D. D.—Thomas Manton, D. D.—Henry Langley, D. D.—William Jenkyns—James Innes—Thomas Watson—Thos. Lye—Matthew Poole—John Millward—John Chester—Geo. Cockayne—Matthew Mead—Robert Franklin—Thos Doolittle—Thos Vincent—Nathaniel Vincent—John Rythen—Wm. Thomson—Nicholas Blaikie—Charles Morton—Edmund Calamy—William Carslake—James Janeway—John Hicks—John Baker—Richard Mayo.”

T.

B.

RELIGIOUS DUTIES OF PARENTS AND HEADS OF FAMILIES.

The testimony which is borne to the religious character of Abraham is uniformly sustained throughout the brief history of this patriarch. Traces of human imperfection, indeed, appear in some of the incidents of his life, but they are imperfections of the lightest shades—not of that dark and aggravated kind which we discover in the character of many who in other respects were honourably distinguished. It is manifest that in the general tenor of his whole life, he maintained a habitual trust and dependance on God; that this habitual disposition was cherished by the constant exercises of piety; and having maintained the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end, he at length died in the faith, and was admitted into the city for which he looked—“the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

It is not my intention, however, to delineate the general excellence of Abraham's character, but to draw attention to one of the particular virtues for which he was distinguished—his faithful

discharge of the duties devolving on him as a parent and head of a family. For this is the testimony of God concerning him:—“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”

1. The rights and duties of heads of families are ordained and enjoined by God—or in other words, family government is a divine institution.

This averment will be readily admitted in regard to parents and children. The authority of the parent, the subordination of the child—are manifestly founded in nature; that is, they arise necessarily from the relation in which the parties stand towards each other. The express enactment of the moral law is founded on this relationship: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” It is true, this divine command merely declares obedience to be the duty of children; but the duty to obey, implies also the right to rule or command. A parent who does not wisely rule, is as much guilty of a breach of this command, as a child who refuses to obey; for legitimate obedience on the part of the child presupposes legitimate command on the part of the parent.

I put forth this statement at the outset thus plainly and explicitly, because I fear that the proper foundation of parental authority is apt to be forgotten in the practical management of children; for if the parent forget that his authority is founded on nature, and on the law of God adapted to it—there is great danger that the child may forget this too; and proper authority being thus subverted on the one part, proper subordination will be subverted on the other, and the benevolent intention of the divine law will be frustrated. Hence I would say, that if a parent yield up the authority with which God has invested him, and cease to command his children and his household: and if instead thereof, he should descend to the arts of coaxing and solicitation, he is guilty of transgressing the law of God, and is most likely to encounter frequent disobedience on the part of his children, because he relinquishes the influence of that authority with which God has invested him.

When we speak of the right and duty of a parent to command his children, we do not mean that he should exercise this right or perform this duty in stern and imperious language. We do not