

the face of an ungodly world, to say with Joshua, "As for us, we will serve the Lord."

In the third and last place, we observe that personal piety will and must lead to a sincere anxiety for the souls of others, and especially for those joined to us in the endearing ties of nature. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." He was concerned for the well-being of every individual who composed that large assembly. He would advise and entreat them, with all earnestness, to choose that service which he knew and could assure them was reasonable and good, and certain to be crowned with a reward the most lasting and glorious; and sincerely did he pray that God would so dispose their hearts; but should they disregard his counsels, and turn away to other gods, he was determined that his family, so far as his authority and example and teaching could effect it, would be differently resolved. Whatever professions men may make, and however conspicuous may appear their zeal for the reformation of their fellow-men, it is impossible they can be sincerely interested until they have previously felt, in their own case, the fearful and perilous condition of the unrenewed and unpardoned sinner. When we see a man in the anguish of bodily sufferings, we feel for him, we pity, we deeply sympathize, and we would relieve, if it were possible; and we thus feel because we have experienced what bodily pains are. In the same way, in order truly to feel for our fellow-men whose souls are diseased and dying, we must ourselves have first felt the pains of that spiritual malady, and have seen the dread consequences, if not delivered from it and effectually healed. The man who experienced this in his own soul—who felt and groaned under the guilt of sin, and thus was made to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?"—that man cannot witness his fellow-men pursue the path of sin but with grief and sorrow. He knows where this path leads, and where it must terminate. Knowing and believing this, all the feelings of his soul are urging him to pray and labor, and to employ every possible means to turn them from the fatal path. But, while the believer's heart is thus drawn forth towards his fellow-men, and embraces, in its prayers, the welfare of every one of his neighbors and every family of mankind, more especially does he feel anxious and concerned for the immortal souls that compose his own family and are placed in his own care. The ties which bind them to his heart are stronger, and proportionally stronger and more lively will be his anxiety; and while he must be influenced by this, he will be no less so by the thought that the responsibility arising from the relation sustained is of a heavier nature and more solemn. A man may be discouraged in his efforts to labor for others, from a sense of his weakness and inability, and from a fear that his advice may be scoffed at; but no man can plead

such excuses for neglecting to labor for the souls of his own family, who have been committed by God to his special charge. Every Christian parent is placed by God, as the head of his family, to teach, to guide, and to impress, by precept and example, in the minds of his children, the value of the Word of God and the preciousness of the Saviour there revealed. And while thus he must be diligent in imparting the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, he must also continue in earnest prayer for the divine influence, which alone can render his efforts effectual. It is surely unnecessary to say that every parent who knows the value of the immortal soul, the character of its fallen condition, the doom impending over it, and the great change which must be effected in order to its salvation, will be animated with persevering diligence in thus laboring. His affection for his family; the danger to himself if he neglects the duties and makes light of the responsibilities of his position; the express command of God that he train up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and the gracious and sure promise attached to the diligent and prayerful obedience; all unite in urging to the most earnest diligence. The parent who is not impressed with this, and to whom the souls of his children are not a subject of deep anxiety and continued prayer, let him not deceive himself by imagining that he ever experienced the saving influence of the grace of God. While concerned for their worldly prosperity and comfort; and while everything that pertains to the welfare of the body is of lively interest, that makes him toil hard, but cheerfully; and while the least pain and suffering endured by them renders him anxious and unhappy, he yet feels no real solicitude for the interests of the undying spirit;—it is vain for him to speak of personal piety. Whatever his profession and his apparent zeal in many other things, while thus acting towards his own family, it is certainly evident he has not felt the soul to be more precious than the body, nor the interests of eternity more important than those of the present world. The parent who has seen these things under their true aspect, need we say wherein his anxiety shall be specially exercised? It is not in reference to this world, and the position which his family may attain. He will, indeed, be concerned about that. He will provide for their wants, and supply, as far as it is possible for him, every needful comfort; but, O, it is their future happiness that especially fills his heart with solicitude. It is, that God may be their God and Father; and to see them walk in the paths of holiness, it is this that gladdens his heart. When God condescended to give Abraham special marks of His favor, and to present him with assurances of the great things He was to do for him, the godly Patriarch, instead of dwelling on these things, was drawn with anxiety to the child already