

The Duties of Children to their Parents

Deuteronomy 27:14, 16

By Cotton Mather

*The Levites shall speak, and shall say unto all the Men of Israel, with a loud voice:
Cursed is he that setteth Light,
By his Father or his Mother.*

And All the people shall say, Amen.

I am going to Entertain you with a Discourse, that cannot have a fitter preface, than those words in Psalm 34.11: Come, ye Children; Hearken unto me, I will teach you the Fear of the Lord. The Children of my Neighbors are now appearing among us. Yea, Our Little Ones are no Little part of the Assembly. And very many of these are the Children of Pious Parents, the Children whose Piety has therefore been fervently desired and required by their Parents. Come, Ye Children, Hearken to me; I will tell you, what you shall do, that your Parents may be Happy in you, and that your own Happiness may be secured and increased.

There was a Solemnity sometimes observed upon the Two Mountains of Ebal and Gerizzim, in the Land of Israel. On the Top of Mount Ebal there stood the Six of the Israelitish Tribes and Six on the Top of Mount Gerizzim. Certain Levites with the Ark of God, in the Valley between them, directing themselves unto Mount Ebal with a Loud Voice, uttered very Distinctly, no less than Twelve terrible Curses, unto which the Tribes on that Mount, made the very Heavens ring, with a dreadful, Amen, unto them.

But between each of these Curses, the Levites directed themselves unto Mount Gerizzim, with Blessings directly opposed unto those Curses; and the Tribes on that Mount, gave the Shout of a Joyful, Amen, upon them.

'Tis true, the Order prescribing the Blessings, is not so distinctly Recited by Moses, as that of the Curses; because 'tis Reserved as the Special Glory of our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and of His Glorious Gospel, to bring in the Blessings of Obedience.

Until the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ arrive unto us, the Law does pronounce unto us nothing but Curses, we hear nothing but a Thunder of Wrath Cursing of

us.

The Second of the Direful Curses, which the Levites of God, facing to Mount Ebal, pronounced was, Cursed be he that sets Light by his Father or his Mother.

Doubtless, when the vast Body of people, as one man, replied, Amen, upon it, it sounded like an horrible Thunder-clap. Yea, but the Thunder-clap is not yet over; the peals of it, are this very Day to be again Sounded, in the midst of you, O Congregation of God.

We read, that when the thing thus Appointed, was first observed by the Tribes of Israel, in the Days of Joshua, [Joshua 8:35]. There were the Little Ones, in the Congregation. It is not amiss, that there are so many Little Ones in the Great Congregation here come together; and unto Them especially, am I now to bring that Warning from God.

The heavy Curse of God, Will fall upon those Children, That make Light of their Parents.

To Set Light by one's Parents, is in other words, to Treat them with any Ungodly Contempt: And, you mind it, My Children, that the Curse of God is denounced, not only upon Children, which cast Contempt upon their Fathers:

Oftentimes the Fathers have the Wisdom to keep up their Authority, and keep themselves above the Contempt of their Children.

But the Mothers do more frequently by their Fondness, and Weakness, bring upon themselves, the Contempt of their Children, and Lay themselves Low, by many Impertinencies.

Now, behold, the Admonition of Heaven; the Children which cast Contempt upon their Mothers do also bring themselves under the Curse of God.

The Curse of God! The Terriblest Thing that ever was heard of; The First born of Terribles! Can't I mention this Tremendous Thing, The Curse of God; and, Oh, My Children, Will not you Tremble at it?

Who can forbear crying out, as Elihu did, when he heard the Thunders of God railing in the Heavens over him, At this my heart even Trembles, and it is moved out of its place! I hope, none of you are come to such a Degree of Atheism, as to Defy, the Curse of God: You won't mock at the Fear of the most Fearful Thing, in the World.

But give me your Attention, while I do from the Oracles of the Almighty God, handle that CASE among you.

Case

What Respect, to their Parents must be rendered by the Children, that would not by Affronts to their Parents, bring down upon themselves the dreadful Curses of God?

The Lessons, which I have now to Set you, My Children, be these.

I. Maintain in your own Spirits, a Dread of those Dreadful Curses, with which the God of Heaven uses to take Vengeance on the Children, who put not Respect, but Contempt, upon their Parents. Beyond, how dreadfully the Judgments of God follow the Children that Set Light by their parents; and Oh, my Warned Children, upon the sight of those Warnings, cry out, Lord, my Flesh trembles for fear, and I am afraid of those Judgments!

Indeed there is no Sin more usually Revenged, with the Sensible and Notable Curses of God, than that Sin, The Contempt of Parents.

Exasperated Parents themselves, do sometimes Imprecate Curses upon their Children; and the Invisible World with a strange, but a quick work, usually says, Amen, to those Curses.

But, I beseech of you, O Parents, that be your Exasperations What they will, you forbear to use any Imprecations on your Children. Alas, They will be Cursed Children fast enough, without the least ill wish of yours to hasten it.

When it was Instituted, that the Levites were to proclaim, Cursed is he that sets Light by his Father, or his Mother, One part of the Institution was, All the people shall say, Amen. Truly, it often comes to pass, that when the Curses of God come upon them that set Light by their Parents, it shall be so, that all the people shall take Notice of it; all the people shall see an Amen, set unto it, shall see it Ratified. Children, I must be a little particular with you.

First. Undutiful Children, for the Sin of the Contempt they cast upon their Parents, are often Cursed by God, with being Left unto yet more Sin against Him. I could not have spoken a more Terrible word! This is most certain, The more Sinful any man is, the more Cursed is that man. It is an amazing Vengeance of God, that gives a Sinner up to Sin for Sin, and Curses a Sinner for one Sin, by Leaving him to another.

But Undutiful Children, are commonly Cursed, and Banned by such a Vengeance of God. We read of some Sinners, whom the Justice of God gives up to Sin, and this is one Brand upon those doleful Sinners, in Rom. 1:30: Disobedient unto Parents.

The Fifth Commandment stands in the Front of all Six, upon the Second Table of the Law. Children, If you break the Fifth Commandment, there is not much Likelihood, that you will keep the rest; No, there is Hazard, that the Curse of God, will give you up to break every one of them all.

Undutiful Children soon become horrid Creatures, for Unchastity, for Dishonesty, for Lying, and all manner of Abominations: And the Contempt which they cast upon the Advice of their Parents, is one thing that pulls down this Curse of God upon them.

They who sin against their Parents, are sometimes by God given up to Sin against all the world beside. Mind the Most Scandalous Instances of Wickedness and Villainy; You'll ordinarily find, they were first Undutiful Children, before they fell into the rest of their atrocious Wickedness.

Secondly, Undutiful Children for the Contempt they cast upon their Parents are often Cursed by God, with a Mischief brought upon all their Affairs. A Strange Disaster uses to follow Undutiful Children, much Evil pursues that kind of Sinner; there is a secret Vengeance of God, perplexing their Affairs; through that Vengeance of God, None of their Affairs do prosper with them.

When David was vexed with one of his Undutiful Children, he could foretell, in Psal. 55:19. God shall Afflict them. There is a Secret Blast of God, upon Undutiful Children.

They are Afflicted in their Estates: It is the Curse of God upon them, for their being Loathe, to do what they could for their Parents, with their Estates.

They are Afflicted in their Bodies: It is the Curse of God upon them, for their Dishonouring the Parents of their Bodies.

God Afflicts them with Reproaches: 'Tis the Curse of God upon them; they have Reproached or Despised their Parents.

They are followed with one plague after another, by the Irresistible Wrath, and Curse of God: they can't comprehend, how they come to be so plagued in all their Interests: 'Tis it may be their Contempt of their Parents, that has been the Worm at the Root, which causes all to wither with 'em. And if these Undutiful Children, ever Live to have Children of their own, God pays 'em home in their own Coin; God pays 'em in the Undutifulness of their own Children, in the Undutifulness of their own Children, God makes 'em to possess the Iniquities of their Youth.

Judah, cast Contempt upon his Parents, by Marrying a Canaanitess, as it should seem without their Consent: God Cursed this Judah with a couple of Children who were such Wretches, that the Immediate Hand of Heaven, dispatch'd 'em

out of the World.

You have doubtless been inform'd of that famous History, in the *Theatrum Historie*; A vile Son did once beat his old Father, and then Drag him to the Threshold of the House, by the Hair of the Head. Afterwards, when he grew Old himself, (which by the way, was a Rare Thing!) his own Son did in like manner beat him, and then Drag him also, by the Hair of the Head, not only to the Threshold, but out of the Doors, into the Dirt. Hereupon he cried out with Anguish, Ah! If this Varlet had pulled me only to the Threshold, I had been served, but just as my Father was by me! Children, Remember this.

Thirdly, Death; Yea, an Early Death, and a Woeful Death, is not seldom the Curse of God upon Undutiful Children for their being so. It is the Tenour of the Precept, Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long upon the Land. Mind it, Children; Your Days are not like to be long upon the Land, if you Set Light by your Father or Mother.

When Absalom, with his Cruelty, was manifesting a Bloody Undutifulness, his offended Father predicted thus much, That those bloody and crafty men, should not Live out half their Days. Why, he knew, that the very Finger of God, had once written as much as this comes to; That Children, which did not Honour their Parents, must not look to have their Days long in the Land.

We have all heard the Fate of that Undutiful Absalom; now some Travellers Report that in the place where Absalom was Buried, there is now a vast Heap of Stones, thus produced: It is customary for them, that go by the place, to throw a Stone upon it, using these words;

Thus it shall be done unto the Son that Rebelleth against his Father.

Stand still, O my Children and Look with Horror upon the Grave of Absalom: Read there, and see the Curse of God upon the Undutiful.

Children that cast Contempt on the Parents, who have been the Instruments of their Life, do thereby, what, but make Forfeitures of their Life?

It becomes Children to reckon it one main Design, and Business, and privilege of their Life, to be Comforts unto their Parents: When they cease to do so, God with a direful Curse often gives that Order about them, Take away the Life of that Undutiful Creature! That Creature shall no longer Live in the World. It was an Edict of Heaven, in *Exod. 21:17*. He that curseth his Father or his Mother, shall surely be put unto Death.

And what shall then be done unto the Children, that prove Curses unto their Father, or their Mother? Undutiful Children are so; But the Curse of God puts them to Death for it: And because those Undutiful Children are Wicked over

much, therefore they Die before their Time.

Yea, 'tis no unusual Thing for the Death of Undutiful Children, to be Embittered with some Extraordinary Circumstances of Confusion and Calamity. I tell you, O Undutiful Children; There is Danger, Lest you be so Cursed of God, as to be Hanged on a Tree, at the Last.

It is Remarkable, That the Most of them, who are Executed on the Gallows, do at their Execution cry out of This: Oh, 'Tis my Undutifulness unto my Parents, 'Tis my Disobedience unto my Parents, that hath brought me unto this Lamentable End!

It is a memorable passage, in Prov. 30:17: The Eye that mocks at his Father, and despises to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall Eat it. It seems, an Untimely and a Tragical Death, often Exposes the Carcasses of those Children, to the Carnivorous Fowls of Heaven.

There was a Law in Israel, Deut. 21:21: That the Rebellious Child should be put to Death. After Stoning, he was Hang'd up; for in Israel they Hang'd up none, till they had first otherwise kill'd him; and no doubt, his Corpse being taken down, as it was to be done before Sunset, it was thrown into a Noted Pit, such an one as that, into which they threw the Corpse of Judas over the Precipice; and there the Fowls of Heaven prey'd upon it. Agur perhaps alludes to This; And we often see it so, that the Rebellious Child, is left of God, unto those Crimes, for which he is put to Death, e're it be long.

More than so; Undutiful Children are Unnatural Children; And the Curse of God sometimes gives over Unnatural Children to commit the most Unnatural Murders. They have Murdered themselves, and been Self-Destroyers: As they have Sinn'd against Nature, so they Die the most against Nature, that can be.

A Young man in this Country Drown'd himself; but he Left behind him a Writing to his Father, wherein he complain'd, O Father, I have kept my Soul, as long as I could; My Ruin was the pride and stubbornness of my Tender Years!

But is this all? No; Lastly; All the Curse of God upon Undutiful Children hitherto, is but the Death, riding the Pale Horse in the Revelation; whereof 'tis said, Hell followed. I am after all to tell you, That the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, will be the portion of Undutiful Children after all; Children that cast Contempt upon their Parents, God will cast into the Vengeance of Eternal Fire at the Last, and into Everlasting Contempt.

Surely, the Damned, are the Cursed of God! Hear, O Children; If you are the Children of Rebellion, the Curse of God will make you the Children of Perdition, throughout Eternal Ages.

Undutiful Children, what are they, but the Children of Belial? This is as much as to say, they are the Children of Satan; and unto Satan they shall go. The Bible has call'd 'em, The Children of the Devil; And whither shall the Children of the Devil go, but into the Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels? The Fiends of Darkness, will be the Ravens, and the Eagles, that shall fasten their Talons, in the Eyes of those Children.

When our Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of the World, foretells, that in the Day of Judgment, having said unto those on His Right Hand, Come ye Blessed, He will say unto those on His Left Hand, Depart, ye Cursed, into Everlasting Fire, with the Devil and his Angels; He seems to allude unto the action between Gerizzim and Ebal. Truly, the Children Damn'd of old, upon Mount Ebal, for Setting Light by their Father or their Mother, will be They, whom the Lord Jesus Christ, will one Day Doom, to Depart from Him into Everlasting Fire, with the Devil and his Angels. It was said, in Prov. 20:20 - Whoso curseth his Father, or his Mother, his Lamp shall be put out in Obscure Darkness.

Children, If by Undutifulness to your Parents, you incur the Curse of God, it won't be Long before you go down into Obscure Darkness, even, into Utter Darkness: God has Reserv'd for you the Blackness of Darkness forever.

Be it known to you; that Undutifulness to your Parents, will bring you to feel many Stripes, from an Enrag'd Conscience in the World to come; for you know the Will of God; Your Undutifulness is a Sin against your Conscience.

Yea, be Dutiful to thy Parents, or expect all the formidable outpourings of an Infinite and Eternal Wrath upon they Soul.

Thou dost not value the Wrath of thy Parents; It is a Light Thing to thee: But the Wrath of the Lord God Omnipotent, Oh, Don't make Light of That; It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God!

I hope, we have been long enough upon Mount Ebal. Shall we now turn a little unto Mount Gerizzim?

II. Let the Signal Blessings of God, upon Children who treat their Parents with due Respect, find much Respect with you, be a great Encouragement unto you, have a strong Impression upon you.

The Levites, as far as we understand, were to turn unto Mount Gerizzim, and with a loud voice to say, Blessed be he, who doth not set Light by his Father, or his Mother: And all the people were to say, Amen.

Hearken, O my Children, to the Blessings of God, that shall be poured and showered from on High upon the Dutiful; and let them charm you, into all possible Dutifulness.

There are Children, whose continual Desire and Prayer it is, That they may be in all Things made Rich Blessings unto their Parents. They Honour their Parents, and are an Honour to their Parents. Their Parents do with Glad Hearts behold their Wisdom, and must bear this Testimony for them, Never were Parents more Happy in their Children.

O the Blessings that belong to Children of such a Character! If it might be said, as it was by David, when God gave the Temple of the Lord; in Psal. 127:5 Blessed is the man, that hath his Quiver full of such Arrows,; Then surely, Blessed are the Arrows, that are in the Quiver of such a man!

The Holy Spirit of God sets a special Remark, upon that Command, which requires Children to be Dutiful unto their Parents: in Eph. 6:2 - 'Tis the First Command [of the Second Table] with a promise, That it may be well with thee.

It shall be well with you, O ye Dutiful Children: you have the word of a God for it. You may note it, That in the Command, what we Translate, That thy Days may be Long, is to be read, That they may prolong thy Days.

Who are those They? They are they Father, and thy Mother. But how can thy Father, and thy Mother, prolong thy Days? How, but by Blessing of thee, in the Name of the Almighty God.

If the Days of such a Child be not prolong'd, we must allow a Sovereignty in such Dispensations of Heaven; but there is cause to hope, for such a Child, that God has prolong'd his Days, in the happiness of the Heavenly Word.

This is plain; Those Parents, that are Blessed with Dutiful Children, do with an inexpressible Agony wish all sorts of Blessings to their Children. If it were in their power, to confer Blessings upon their Children; Oh, how much would they do for them!

Now because, 'tis in the power of God alone to confer Blessings upon us, these Parents go to God, for their Children, and they say with good old Jacob, God Bless the Lads!

I assure you, such Benedictions from obliged Parents, have a more than ordinary Authority, and Efficacy in them. For one's Parents to go before God, and plead, Ah, Lord, such a Child of mine, has Loved me, and Served me, and Helped me; and his good Carriage is to me, has been such, that even upon that Account I have reason to wish him all the good in the world: I therefore bring that Child unto thee, and I pray thee to Bless him with all Blessings of Goodness: To be thus Blessed by one's Parents, O my Children, 'tis a thing of more value than if a rich Inheritance were to be received from them.

This is very certain, There is no point of Religion, more certainly and commonly Rewarded with Blessings in this world, than that of rendering unto Parents the Dues that pertain unto them. A signal Prosperity, even in this world, uses to attend those Children, that are very Obedient or Serviceable unto their Parents. Those Reckabites, that Obey the Commandment of their Father, Thus said the Lord of Hosts, They shall stand before me forever.

There are Children, who have with unspeakable pleasure, supported their Aged Parents, in their Necessities; They have said unto their Necessitous Parents, like Joseph, Thus saith thy Son, come down to me, Thou shalt be near to me!

I believe, There are some at this very Time, in this very place who can say, That from the Time, they did for their Parents as they have done, God hath signally Smiled upon them.

Friend, That Aged Father or Mother, in thy House, is not only the Glory of thy House, but a better and a richer Thing than a Mine of Silver there.

Children, Be Blessings to your Parents, and be Assured, That those Parents will be Greater Blessings to you, than you can be to Them. They will be so as Long as they Live; yea, more than so; After your Parents are Dead and Gone, the Effects of their Prayers will yet Live: All the Prayers which those Gratified Parents put up for you will be still Answering, after they are Dead, as long as you yourselves do Live.

David had been a Son, very Tender of his Parents: and now, says, David, in Ps. 27:10: When my Father and my Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up: He'll Requite all that I did for my Father, and my Mother.

Shall I go a step further? When you yourselves also are Dead and Gone, even Your Children may Reap the Fruits of what you did for your Parents: Your Posterity, may fare the better for your Dutifulness.

The Jews have a Notion among them; 'That for the sake of the Honour, that Esau paid unto his Father, the Israelites Long after might not Extirpate the Edomites, who were the Posterity of Esau. Moses tells the Israelites, You have compassed this Mountain Long Enough. Why? Because Esau compassed a Mountain in Hunting for his Father.

But after all; Dutiful Children acting upon principles of Christianity, may hope to meet with their Christian Parents in Heaven; There Abraham the Religious Father, Their Isaac the Dutiful Son, there Jacob the Dutiful Grandson, are Together; Blessed are they that meet there, in the Light of the face of God; Blessed throughout Eternal Ages! Consider This, O Children; and Set not Light by your Parents.

But being, by these Considerations prepared for it, it may now be Time to say;

III. The Respects that Children must render unto their Parents, are comprised in those Three Words, Reverence, and Obedience, and Recompence.

Children do Set Light by their Parents, or cast Contempt on them, if they withhold any of these Three Regards from them, and the Curse of God, will Revenge the Contempt.

First, You Set Light by your Parents, if you withhold from them, the Reverence that is due unto them.

The God of Nature hath placed a Distance, between Parents and their Children; Children then Set Light by their Parents when they Forget this Distance.

There is first, and Inward Reverence, that Children owe unto their Parents.

It was Enjoined in Lev. 19:3: Ye shall Fear every man, his Mother and his Father. Children, you Set Light by your Parents, if your minds are not Struck, with some awful Apprehension of their Superiority over you; if you don't see an awful Image of God, in their Superiority; if you don't look upon them, as the very Deputies of God, in their several Families.

But this Reverence must have some Outward Expression given of it.

There is an Outward Reverence, that Children owe unto their Parents. Hence 'tis said, in Mal. 1:6: If I be a Father, where is my Honour? Hence 'tis said, in Prov. 31:28: Her Children Rise up, and call her Blessed.

Their Speeches, both to their Parents, and of their Parents, must be full of Reverence. When Children speak to their Parents, their Language must carry in it, some Acknowledgment of their being such.

Thus in Gen. 31:35: She said unto her Father, my Lord. When Children speak of their Parents, they must show a concern, that nothing Abusive be uttered. Thus, in Psal. 127:5: The Children of Youth, seem to Defend their Father, from the Enemies in the Gate, or, False-Accusers.

And their Actions towards their Parents must yet more Emphatically Speak the Reverence, which they would Retain for them. Thus is Gen. 48:12: Joseph bowed himself, with his Face to the Earth, before his Father. Thus in I Kings 2:10: Solomon Rose up to meet his Mother, and bowed himself unto her, and She Sat on his Right Hand.

Now, Children, you Set Light by your Parents, if you Talk Saucily and Clownishly

unto them; If you Reproach them, defame them, and Backbite them; if your Behaviour towards them have any malapert Impudence in it.

Though your Parents may give you never so much Occasion of Complaint, it becomes you to make as Little Reflection upon it, as ever you can. Say Nothing, but what the Glory of God makes it Necessary for you to say.

Though they should happen to do you any Injuries, you may not show those Resentments, that you have upon the Injuries of other Persons.

Secondly; You Set Light by your Parents if you withhold from them, the Obedience that is due unto them.

If Children don't Study to Do, what their Parents would have them to do; and if the Word and Will of their Parents have not the Force of a Law upon them, the Children do Set Light, by them, in such a misbehaviour.

It was demanded in Eph. 6:1: Children, Obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is Right. Children, you Set Light by your Parents, if you don't count it a Right, a Just, a Fair Thing, and a Thing very Reasonable, for you to be the Servants of them, who have done so much for you their Children, and beware of Crossing them, who have done so much to Comfort you.

It was said, in Col. 3:20: Children, Obey your Parents in all Things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. But, Children, You Set Light by your Parents, if it be not also very Well-pleasing unto You, to Please them, so far as without Sin you may do it; and if you be not unwilling at any Time, to give them any Displeasure.

When the Father of Joseph laid his commands upon him, he obey'd those commands, though with the Risk of his very Life. It should be the very Joy of your Life, to yield Obedience unto the commands of your Parents.

Do your Parents give you any Instruction? You are call'd upon, in Prov. 4:1: Hear, ye Children, the Instruction of a Father." Most of all, in the Grand Motions & Changes of your Life, Children, your Parents are to be consulted, and the Satisfaction of your Parents is to be proposed.

In your Callings, and in your Matches especially the Directions of your Parents must be of Exceeding Moment with you; Indeed Nothing should be done without them! Wherefore, Children, you Set Light by your Parents, if you make nothing of their Commands, and if you tread their just Reproofs under foot.

You Set Light by them, if you Leave Undone what they Desire, and much more, if you Do what they Forbid.

You Set Light by them, if their Anger, be a Light matter with you.

Thirdly, You Set Light by your Parents, if you withhold from them the Recompence that is due unto them.

Those Children Evidently Set Light by their Parents, who are Insensible of the Obligations which their Parents have laid upon them, or, who count any thing too much to be done by Children for their Parents.

Of Joseph 'tis said, in Gen. 47:12: He Nourished his Father, and all his Father's Household with Bread. And it is elsewhere pressed upon us, Despise not thy Mother, when she is old. Children, you Set Light by your Parents, if you don't Requite them as well as you can, and if you imagine that you ever can Requite them Enough. It was a Sad saying of Luther's, That One Father will more willingly maintain Ten Sons, than Ten Sons will maintain One Father. But those Children do Set Light by their Parents, who had not as liev [willingly, gladly, freely] maintain their Father, as maintain their Children; and who would not gladly be to their Mother, the Restorer of her Life, and the Nourisher of her old Age, as the Mother of Ruth, found her Son-in-Law to be unto her.

It was demanded, in I Tim. 5:4: Let the Children Learn to show piety at home, and requite their Parents; for that is Good and Acceptable before God. Those Children have no Piety in them, they Set Light by God, as well as by their Parents, unto whom it is not a most Acceptable Thing to make some Recompence unto their Parents, for all the vast Benefits which their Parents have heaped upon them.

Children, Do you think, you can ever make a Recompence unto them, that have Born you, and Bred you, and Fed you, and Endured Thousands of Sorrows for you.

One says, 'Many treat their Parents, as they do their Candles: they Set them in High Candle sticks while they are full of Tallow, but when all their Substance is wasted, they tread them underfoot. And some there are, who do not Support their Parents, but Wrong them, and Rob them, and Pillage them. They Waste their Parents.

Alas, Children, you Set Light by your Parents in all of this Impiety. But, Oh, don't make Light of this Impiety; Say, Destruction from God is a Terror to me!

IV. By Father and Mother, All sorts of Parents are intended;

Let the Caution be accordingly Extended, and Set Light by no sorts of Parents Whatsoever.

Natural Parents cannot safely come under the Contempt of their Children: God will Curse the Children that Set Light by Them; and can you dream then, that

God will allow any Contempt of Political Parents, of Ecclesiastical, or of Scholastical?

There are Parents in the Commonwealth, as well as in the Family;

There are Parents in the Church, and Parents in the School, as well as in the Commonwealth. If you Set Light by these Parents, you Herd yourselves among the Cursed of God.

Remember, O Servants, thy Master, is thy Father, and thy Mistress, is thy Mother. Do not Set Light by thy Master, or thy Mistress, Lest the Curse of God at last hang thee up in Chains, among the Monuments of His Indignation.

Because thy Superiours in the Family, are thy Parents, therefore there is laid that Charge of God upon thee in 1 Pet 2:18: Servants, be subject unto your Masters, with all Fear, not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward.

The Proud hearts of many Servants, make them discontent at their Servile State. The Subjection expected from them throws them into a very crumbling Discontent.

Ye proud Wretches, your Sin, was the very Sin that at first made all the Devils in Hell. The Devils, those proud Spirits could not bear to be Servants in such a Station as God had ordered for them; and for this their Pride, The Almighty has Cursed them, and Damned them.

Servants, have a care, Lest by your Pride you fall into the Condemnation of the Devil. It is the Providence and the Ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ that hath made you Servants; and if out of Regard unto Him, you carry it well in your Servitude, He will graciously Accept all that you do, as if done unto Himself.

It was therefore said, in Col. 3:23, 24: Servants, whatever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord you shall Receive the Reward of the Inheritance, [which belongs unto Sons] for ye Serve the Lord Christ. Well then, Don't Set Light by your Masters. If they be Masters, where is your Fear of them?

Expose not their Failings, if you see any in them. Let there be no Sullenness, no Sauciness, no Rude Retortings, in your Deportments towards them. Give them no cause to complain, with Job, I called my Servant, and he gave me no Answer.

Be not those Eye Servants, that will do their Master's will, no longer than their Master's Eye is upon them; The All-seeing eye of the Almighty God is upon you.

Transgress not their just Commands, either Wilfully, or Carelessly; If you do, the Commands of God are also Transgressed in your Miscarriages.

Indeed, if your Masters bid you do an ill Thing, you must with modest Expostulations, rather Suffer than Obey. But if they bid you do what is Fit and Right, you Sin against God, if you do it not; If they will not obey you, Masters, Turn them out of Doors.

Nor is this all that Servants have to do: Servants, you must use all Diligence, and Faithfulness, in your Master's Business. A Slothful Servant is truly called a Wicked Servant.

But Eleazer, the Servant of Abraham, would not Eat his Victuals, till his Masters Business were dispatched. Let your Master's Business be honestly discharged, though you should like Jacob, when a Servant, have your Sleep departing from your Eyes.

When your Masters do send you on Errands, Loiter not; Be not Sluggards to them that feed you.

And be the true Sons of Israel; able to say, Thy Servants are True men. Gehazi was a Servant that Lied unto his Master; but God made that Liar to become a Leper. Of all Faults in your Servants, I advise you, Masters, never to let that of Lying be unpunished.

But that of Stealing often accompanies it; of which, O Servants, beware; for God will never let That go unpunished. I vehemently call upon you, That you never venture to wrong your Masters unto the value of a Penny as long as you Live. Mark it, you'll Entail Eternal Vexations upon you, and God will make you lose a Pound for every penny, whereof you have wrong'd your Masters.

Have you ever purloined from them? Oh, Fly penitently unto the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon, and make as much Restitution, and as full Reparation, as ever thou canst; or the Jealous God, will never pardon thee, till the Torments of the Damned, have Exacted the utmost Farthing from thee.

Servant, Be such a Blessing in thy Master's House, as Joseph was to his. Contrive all the ways imaginable, that thy Master may be the better for thee. It may be, thy Master will Bless God for Thee. However God will Bless thee in thy Serving of him. If you slight all these Things, Look for the Curses of God. And now, Let people Remember, That Rulers are Parents. Don't Set Light by Them. The Charge of God upon people, is That in Tit. 3:1: Be Subject, and Obey Magistrates, and be ready to every Good Work, and speak evil of no man; much less of the Magistrates.

Our Setting Light by Excellent Magistrates, has been the Scandalous Crime of our Country; and for that Crime whole Colonies may come to smart under the Revenges of God.

Let Churches Remember, That Pastors are Parents. Don't Set Light by Them. The Charge of God upon Churches, is That in Heb. 13:17: Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give Account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

There hath been a Disorder, called, Corahism, sometimes very Extravagant. But for Setting Light by Ministers, that have been Holy, and Able, and Faithful, and Painful Men of God, God sometimes removes a Candlestick out of its place, or at least says, Never shall a Burning and a Shining Light more be seen standing in it.

Let Scholars regard their Tutors as their Parents. My Child, The Master of the School is a Father to thee. Those that were under the Education of Moses, are called, The Sons of Moses.

Wherefore, Scholars, Do you with all Conscience of God, Honour your Tutors; and perform the Tasks which they Impose upon you. Don't Set Light by thy School-Master; but Love him, and Prize him, and Hearken to him, and be Thankful to him, and Thankful to God for him. These are ways to Escape the Curses of God.

V. They that have at any Time Set Light by their Parents, must Go to God in Christ for His Pardons , that so His Curses may not overtake them.

Who is there that can say with the Son in the Gospel: who said unto his Father, Lo, these many years do I Serve thee, neither transgressed I at any Time thy Commandment? The Dutifullest Child among us all, hath been so Defective in his Dutifulness, that he dare not plead it before God, in his Justification; He must say, as in Psal. 143:2: Lord, Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant; for in Thy sight shall no man Living be Justified.

What then shall we do? Why, we read concerning Mount Ebal, where the Curses of God were Fulminated in Deut. 27:5,6,7: It was commanded, In Mount Ebal, thou shalt Build an Altar unto the Lord thy God, and thou shalt offer Burnt Offerings thereon unto the Lord thy God, and thou shalt Offer Peace-Offerings, and Rejoice before the Lord thy God. And we find that Joshua, afterwards did accordingly.

It is an Ingenious Note of one upon it: This was no more than Needed, for the Maledictions had no sooner been uttered, but Condemnation and Execution had instantly Ensued, if these Sacrifices with the Merit of Christ therein Typified had not seasonably interceded.

Children, you hear the Convex of Heaven resounding from Ebal with the Comminations of God, Cursed is he that Sets Light by his Father or his Mother.

Our Consciences tell us, That we have done it many a time. Away then, Away to the Antitype of the Altar on Ebal. Oh, plead with God the Burnt Offering of Christ, and the Peace-offering of Christ, that the Curse of God may not seize upon us, that we may not be Burnt in the Flames of His Indignation, that He may be at Peace with us forever.

When it was denounced Cursed is he that Sets Light by his Father or his Mother, it follow'd, that all the people said, Amen. AMEN, is the very Name of Christ. May all the people now fly to that, AMEN,, that they may be sheltered from the Curses of God.

And, Oh, call it to mind the Example of the Lord Jesus Christ. There never was in the world, so Dutiful a Son as He! We read in Lu. 2:51: He went down with His Mother, and His Reputed Father, and though they were very Low in the World, He became subject unto them. We read in Jn.19:17:

That when He was in His Last Agonies, it was a Thing lying very near His Heart, that His Widow-Mother, might be provided for: He said unto a Disciple, Behold, thy Mother! Intimating that He would have him, take her Home unto his own House.

Now, be your Dutifulness to your Parents, never so complete, Let this Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, be all that you will plead with God, as your Title to the promised Blessings of the Dutiful.

VI. Do not Go on, Children, If you value your Lives, and Souls, do not Go on to: Grieve your Parents, by any Disrespect unto their Admonitions, or by any Vanity whatsoever.

You cannot more Make Light of your Parents, than when you Make Light of their Counsels: Your Contempt of their Counsels, will speedily bring down God's Curses upon you.

Moses did well, when he Harkened unto the voice of his Father-in-law, and did all that he had said. It is the voice of Heaven, in Prov. 1:8: My Son, Hear the Instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother.

Is it not the Instruction of thy Father, That thou shouldest avoid all Vicious Company; and, That thou shouldest Pray in Secret every Day; and, That thou should Read and Hear the Word of God, with Assiduity [diligence, zeal, constancy]? Or if not so, yet it may be, the Law of thy Mother, who is in Travailing pains for thee, to see Christ formed in thee.

Now, don't Make Light of the Admonitions, with which thy Parents are thus calling upon thee. If thy Parents Enjoin upon thee any thing that is not Sinful, it will be a

Sin for thee to Refuse the doing of it: How much more is the Sin, if thou dost Refuse to do what the Great God has first Commanded, and thy Parents Enjoin because the Great God has first Commanded?

Oh, my Children, I am afraid, I am afraid, there are some of you, that may read your Doom, in those Ominous words, in I Sam. 2:25: They hearkened not unto the voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them.

It is an unutterable Grief that some of you give unto your pious Parents; They see, that you are still poor, carnal, and thoughtless Creatures: and that perhaps a piece of gay Attire, is of more Account with you, than a Christ, or a Soul.

'Tis told them, That the Ungodly Youths in the Town do horribly poison one another. These youths cry up an Indifferency in Religion, and say, 'Tis out of fashion for a man to be of one Religion more than another; that is, in reality to say, 'Tis out of fashion to be of any Religion at all. So they insensibly draw one another on, to deride Seriousness in Religion, and the most Serious and Lively Preachers of it; Until they become Idle, Profane, Sottish Debauchees, and betimes Ripe for the Fiery Indignation of God.

Your Parents are Trembling, with an unknown Distress and Anguish, Lest you be Entangled in a Familiarity with these Ungodly Youths. It fills your Parents with a grievous Horror, That they cannot see the marks of a Regenerate Soul upon you; They never hear you let fall a word, that may discover in you the least care of a Never-dying Soul. They cannot find out that there are any Transactions between the Lord Jesus and you, about the Salvation of a Soul in the Hands of the Destroyer.

As Austin (Augustine) says, of his Blessed Mother, Toties Fiolios parturiebat, quoties a Deo eos deviare cernebat, so it may be said perhaps of thine, She never sees thee Sinning against God, but it brings the Anguish of a New Travail upon her.

It may be, you once had some Good Beginnings, in Religion; Your Parents felt their Hearts within them Leap for Joy, at those Beginnings; They Hoped Well, This my Child was Lost, but is found; was dead, but is alive! But seeing all your Goodness gone, like the Morning Cloud, and the Early Dew, it throws them into an Extreme Consternation.

How Cheerfully would they give all they have in the world, if they might say of you, Behold, they pray! They are every Day Extremely uneasy, lest you Die before you are New born, and it had been Good for you, that you never had been Born at all.

Ah, Vain Children; Give, Give some Relief to this Grief of your Parents. Fall down before the Lord, and say, Lord, Thou shalt be my Father, and the Guide of my

Youth. Turn to God in Christ, and become Devout Children. Then, say they, My Heart, O my Children, shall Rejoice, even mine!

But your Parents count that you make Light of them, so long as you Lightly Esteem the Rock of your Salvation, and make Light of God, and Christ, and the Covenant of Grace.

And now, I Earnestly testify unto you, That if you Go on, to Sin against God, and against your Parents, the Curses of the great God are impending over you. Those Curses will horribly Wound the Head of those that go on still in their Trespasses.

Yea, though you are the children of Pious Parents, the Advantage you might have had by that, shall be changed into a Misery. The more Pious Parents you have had, the more Forlorn Children shall you be throughout Eternal Ages.

We read that even the Children of Abraham themselves, will be Cast into the Fire of the Wrath of God, if they do not bring forth Good Fruit before Him; And we read of such among the Damned, as Cry out, Oh! Father Abraham, I am Tormented in this Flame!

It is a Strange passage, that I find lately published. The famous Dr. Twiss had been a very wicked Boy. There died a School fellow of his, that was more wicked than he. The Ghost of the Dead Lad, appeared unto Twiss, and horribly Cried out, I am Damned! This was, as his worthy son assures us, the occasion of Twiss' Conversion unto God.

Oh Tis to be Feared, That many of our Young People, who have died at home and abroad, and after the Madness of that Ungodly Life, by which they broke the Hearts of their Parents, are Gone unto the Dead; if they could in Ghost now appear unto their Fellow-Sinners, yet Surviving, they would horribly Cry out, I am Damned! I am Damned, for my Ungodliness!

But you have Enough to Warn you, against all Ungodliness, without One Coming to you from the Dead. And while we thus Warn you, there is this terrible Intimation to be added unto all the rest.

Refractory Child; Thy Pious Parents, themselves will not own thee, in the Day when God shall Curse thee, and cut thee off, and cast thee out forever. And all the Grief which thy Pious Parents here Endured for thee, and from thee, will be Oil to the Everlasting Flames of that Grief, which thou shalt Endure in the Place of Dragons.

Oh, come to a Right Mind, Thou Prodigal; and by Repentance give unto thy Pious Parents cause to say, This is a dear Son, and a pleasant Child. Then the

God of Heaven Himself will Bless thee, and say, I will Surely have Mercy upon them.

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