





QUESTION LXIII.


HICH is the Fifth Commandment ?

W


A N S W E R.

THE Fifth Commandment is, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord*
 *God giveth thee.*

WE have formerly observed, That the Ten Commands, are distributed into Two Comprehensive Parts according as God Himself was pleased to write them, in Two Tables. The former directing us to the Duties of Worship, and the latter to Duties of Charity. Which distribution our Saviour gives Countenance to, in that He reduceth all Moral Obedience to these two heads, Matth. 22. 37, 38. *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.* This also is favoured by the distributing the Principle of Obedience, into *Holiness* and *Righteousness*, Eph. 4. 24. The one serving to first Table, the other to second Table Duties. The reason of this Partition, is warily to be observed. Let us then here remember, that God is the Last End and Supream Object of all our Obedience, nor will it be accepted by Him, except we terminate it in Him : for every Command in the word of God, belongs to Religion, which must have Him for its Object, else it cannot be reckoned to be Religious. But we are to consider this Obedience with a distinct and diverse respect, which it bears to the Object of it, which gives the reason of this distinction, viz in respect of the next and immediate Object, which our Obedience is directed to ; God is the next or immediate Object of all first Table Duties ; for these all point us to Religious Worship, which cannot

be performed to any other but Him, Matth. 4. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* It is therefore Idolatry to pay it to any other : Whereas Man is the Immediate Object of our Charity, or of second Table Duties, tho' all must ultimately terminate on God. All Obedience is called *Love*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. But then it is divided into the Love of God, and of our Neighbour ; and we are to remember, that we are to Love God for Himself, but to Love our Neighbour in and for God. It is not enough that we Love Him, but we must take the measures by which we regulate this Love, from the Mouth of God ; and for this reason, this Love is in Scripture frequently called *Righteousness*, because when we do them Justice, we then Love them ; if otherwise, we do not Love but hate them. Hence that, Lev. 19. 17. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy heart.* Our Saviour sums up all Second Table Duties in that One, Mat. 22. 39. *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self :* And He giveth that gloss upon it, in Math. 7. 12. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the Law and the Prophets.* I shall here only further remark, that as we formerly took notice, that the First Command in the First Table comprehends the ground and reason of all the other Precepts relating to Worship, so this Fifth, which is the First in the Second Table, is the foundation of all that follow, and they may be reduced to, and inferred from it : Nevertheless, God hath seen meet to divide these Duties under several heads, which contain so many particular Precepts for our better information, and therefore there is something peculiar in each of them, which we may take up in their Order : We may therefore proceed to consider this, in the same Method which our Catechism layeth down, and which hath been observed in those which went before.

HERE then,

QUESTION LXIV.

WHAT is required in the Fifth Commandment ?

ANSWER.

THE Fifth Commandment requireth, the preserving the Honour, and performing the Duties belonging to every one in their several Places and Relations, as Superiors, Inferiors, or Equals.

THAT we may take right measures in laying forth the mind and meaning of this Command, and consider the just Comprehension of it, let us in general Observe, That the Fifth Commandment hath a proper respect to the Order which God hath placed among Mankind ; and the Relative Duties which do flow from the Nature of that Order. Only it must be considered, that all Relations, and the Relative Duties which arise from them, do not strictly belong to this Precept, as it is distinct from those which follow ; tho' we observed, they may be reduced to it : For it is a Truth, that every Duty hath it's Duty founded in some Relation, which we bear to the Object of it ; and therefore there are Relative Duties belonging to every of the Precepts. But that which this Command designedly hath respect to, is the Order it self which God hath in Wisdom seen meet to place Mankind in ; which cannot be orderly maintained without some stated Rules for the upholding of it. That therefore we may come at the things contained in the *Affirmative* part of the Command, let us in general observe,

1. **THAT GOD hath appointed that there should be several Ranks & Orders among Mankind in this World.** That there are such Orders, *de facto*, cannot be denied, because we see it every where ; and tho' some barbarous and brutish Nations have but little of it ; yet they have so much as will witness, that there is a Principle rooted in the Nature of Man, that there ought to be such a thing : And that it is of God's Ordination, that there should be such Orders, is certain, not only because the Light of Nature convinceth Mankind of the Necessity of it, and without it the World could not be kept in Order, but would forthwith run into Confusion, and fall into a Rout ; but also God hath told us His mind in this regard in His Word ; and the several Rules there laid down for Men's Carriage therein, fully proves it ; as will afterwards be more particularly considered. Nay, this Order was necessary during Man's Integrity, much more under the Apostacy. One part of the Harmony in Heaven, is the Order there is among the Angels ; and were there not something of it upheld among the Rebel Rout of Devils, Hell must disband. And tho' all Orders which Men may ordain, are not approved by God ; yet that there should be Orders is His revealed

Will and Pleasure : Rom. 13. 1. *The powers that be are ordained of God.*

2. **THAT GOD hath suited Duties to the several Orders, which He hath placed Men in.** The necessity of this appears, from the End of their Appointment, *viz.* For the Good of Mankind, and the maintaining of Peace and Society among Men : Now this End cannot be attained but by setting the due bounds and limits to these Orders, and accommodating of Duties to the several sorts and ends of them. These Rules were at first written upon Men's Hearts, and Man would have known his Duty by the Nature of the Station which God had put him in ; but the Apostacy hath much blurred these Rules, so that Men's Consciences labour of Error about them ; and besides there is a disorderly Disposition in Men, by reason of Carnal Lusts, which makes those in Superiour Order apt to be Boundless and Arbitrary, and so Tyrannical ; and such as are Inferiour to be uneasy, and not willing to bear the Yoke, or be under any Command. Now to rectify both of these disorders, God hath laid down Precepts in His Word, by which he hath set bounds to both these Exorbitancies ; as will also afterwards be considered.

3. **THAT these Duties cannot be mutually discharged, as they ought, without a due respect born each to other, according to the Order wherein they stand so related.** A due respect entertained in the Heart for others, according to the Station which God hath set them in, is absolutely necessary for the Obediential discharge of the Duties which the Precept obligeth us to them in. For tho' if we outwardly carry it to them very fairly and plausibly, they may be satisfied, because they do not know our Hearts ; yet it is no Act of Obedience to God, any further than we have a due regard to His Command, which requires, not Complemental, but Cordial Carriage in all our Duties towards Man ; as, 1 Joh. 3. 18. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.* And as God calls for it, so He knows the Heart, and will judge of our Carriage by it. Besides, if we do not maintain this respect in us to them, there will be the contrary Contempt, which will notwithstanding all our cunning to dissemble it, some way or other discover it self, and make us often Transgressors. It will make the Yoke of Obedience that God hath laid upon our Necks uneasy, which would otherwise be delightful, and so prompt us to break all Order.

4. **THAT all these Orders, together with the Relative Duties belonging to them, and the Principle from which this Obedience must flow, belong to this Command.** This indeed is generally denied by the *Socinians*, and they will allow nothing more to be intended in it, but the Duties arising from the Relation there is between Parents and Children : And the ground of their denial is, because they would introduce their Natural Religion, as that which is more perfect than that which is laid out in the Scriptures : And for that reason would per-

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swade us, that there are more Moral Duties required of Men, than are comprehended in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments given on Mount Sinai. That there are such Duties required of Men, in regard of these Relations cannot be denied, for in other Texts of Scripture they are expressly laid. Here therefore to clear this matter, let us observe,

1. THAT all the Duties both Moral and Positive, which are required in the Word of God, are reducible to one or other of the Ten Commandments. When therefore our Saviour had given the Sum of them, as comprehended in the Two Tables, he adds *Marth. 22. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* i. e. All the Precepts which are to be found in the whole Scriptures, are but Commentaries on these Two, and are therefore methodically to be referred to one or other of them. For this reason the Two Tables, or the Precepts therein contained, are called the Covenant, *Deut. 5. beg.* Now this Covenant consisted of Two parts, viz. What God was, or would be to them, contained in the Preface; and, what He expected they should be to Him, express'd in the Commands themselves; so that all Moral Obedience, or all that He requires of a People in Covenant with Him, is summarily contained in them.

2. THAT the several Orders which God hath placed Men in, and the Relative Duties referring thereto, are reducible to no other Command in the Decalogue, but the Fifth. That they must be reduced to one or other is evident, because else the Decalogue would not be a perfect Rule of Manners or Moral Obedience, which would be to Charge God with imprudence or inadvertency, which is highly derogatory to His Glory. That they do not belong to any of the Precepts of the First Table, is therein manifest because all of them are restrained to Religious Worship, which hath God for it's immediate Object; whereas these Orders are placed between Men, and are therefore nextly to be applied to them, as their immediate Objects. Nor can they be reduced to any of the other Precepts in the Second Table; because tho' they suppose some Relation that Men stand in one to another; yet they do not respect the different Orders of Men, but concern the Common Affairs of Mankind, as they stand in a Level, with regard to the Duties therein enjoyed; as will appear when we come to take them under a distinct Consideration; it therefore remains that they belong to this. Hence,

3. THAT a right taking up the meaning of the Words of the Command, according to Scripture, and Application of the general Rules, formerly given for the Understanding of the Decalogue, will clear up this matter to us. I shall not here repeat the Rules which were laid down, in the Exposition of the Forty-first Question, where we had Nine Rules given for our Direction in this Affair. But we may here take an Account of the Preceptive part of this Command, and the import of the Words, in which it is expressed. The Command it self consists of Two parts, 1. A Precept, *Honour thy Father and thy*

Mother. 2. A Motive to urge it by, *That thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* And it is the former of these that we have present Concern withal: And we are to observe, that the Precept is laid down Affirmatively, whereas all the rest are laid down only Negatively, except the Fourth, which is expressed in both ways: But we have formerly observed, that when any Duty is enjoined, the contrary Sin is forbidden, *et contra*; for in regard to every Command, it is capable of being Sinned against, either by Omission or Commission: Nor need we over-curiously to ask after a Reason why God expresseth some Affirmatively, others Negatively, only it may suffice, that God would have us to know, that it is not enough to abstain from the more gross violations of his Commands; but that He also expects that we do carefully Conform to the Practice of the Duties required in them. In the Precept it self, Two things are to be observed,

1. THE Thing required with respect to these Orders of Men; *Honour.* The word in the first Conjugation signifies to be Heavy; but in another, to Honour: Metaphorically intimating, that the root of Honouring another, is in the Opinion we have of them, which is heavy or ponderous; and hence on the other hand, to Contemn is a word which firstly signifies Light, and therefore it is Metaphorically set forth, by being lightly esteemed, *1 Sam. 2. 30.* And tho' Honour nextly points to the respect and deference which is paid by an Inferiour to a Superior; yet it is here extendible to all the Duties, which are mutually to be performed by all Orders, one to another; in whatsoever Rank they stand related each to the other: And this is explained in the Catechism in Two things;

(1.) THE Preserving the Honour. Honour in propriety of Speech, intends, the inward good Esteem that we have of one for any Eminency or Excellency we observe in him; or for any Dignity which God hath in His Providence put upon him: Now the preserving this Honour comprehends Two things in it, 1. The maintaining of this Esteem in our Hearts. 2. The endeavouring to uphold it in our Carriage or outward Conversation among Men. But these things will come to be distinctly and severally laid forth afterwards.

(2.) THE Performing of the Duties which belong to them: for then we practically Honour a Person, when we carefully discharge the Duties we owe to him, according to the Station which he stands related to us in. It is not enough to maintain an inward esteem of them, but it must be manifested in a way wherein it may be duly testified: And it must be only the Duties which belong, or which we owe to Him on the account of the Post which he is in: To do less than this, is to dishonour him; to do more argues either gross Ignorance, or vile Contempt, or sordid Flattery. What these Duties are, may also be referred to their proper place.

2. THE Object of this Duty, *thy Father and Mother.* Our Catechism expounds it, Every

one in their several Places and Relations : But this needs to be explained. We have before been told, that this Precept doth not engross all the Relations in which Mankind do stand concerned one with another : But only those of Order ; and therefore we are to understand the following Words in the Answer to be Exegetical and Instructive of the former, viz. *Whether Superiours, Inferiours, or Equals.* The Words in the Command are Emphatical and Comprehensive, and are to be understood both properly and tropically.

1. **PROPERLY**, and so it intends, the Immediate Parents of a Person ; and are therefore particularly mentioned, because this Order is most Natural, (as we shall have occasion to observe,) and therefore are most fit to be mentioned, nothing being more convincingly evident by the Light of Nature, than that such a respect is due from Children to their Parents. *Father* and *Mother* are the common Root from which Children spring ; and hence the reason is elsewhere given, *Prov. 23. 22. Hearken unto thy father, that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.* And to this Head do also belong all Progenitors in a direct Line, as Grand Parents, and all ascending ; because we are lineally descended from them : And for that reason they are called our *Fathers* and *Mothers* in Scripture Language.

2. **METAPHORICALLY** ; and so the word is often used in the Scripture : And so it comprehends under it, all Superiours, in what respect soever : We shall therefore find this Title given to Kings ; it was a common Title put upon the Kings of the Philistines ; *Abimelech*, which signifies, *My Father the King* ; and the Servants of *Naaman* addressed him with this Title, *2 Kings 5. 13.* Thus the Priests were entituled by the People ; hence that, *Judg. 17. 10. Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest.* Thus was the Prophet accosted by the King, in, *2 Kings 6. 21. 13. 14.* Thus *Paul* applies himself either to the Elders or Ancient Men in *Jerusalem*, *Acts 22. 1.* And in all these respects it is to be understood in the Command.

3. **SYNECDOCHICALLY** : For as we have observed, all the Duties which are mutual between Persons in respect of the Order they stand in, are here to be understood. It is certain, that from all the Relations that Men bear each to other, there are reciprocal Duties incumbent on them ; and there are Precepts given in the Word of God for them, on both sides, and they cannot be so properly referred to any other Command. So that as the Duties to Superiours is in the first place pointed nextly to, which is to be paid them by Inferiours ; so there is to be considered under this Precept, the Duties which Superiours do owe to Inferiours ; for they are no more left by the Word of God to be *despotic*, than the others to be *disobliged* : And we have before observed, that this latitude is necessary to be allowed, to the right understanding of the Law. So that, both *Children* with respect to their Natural Parents and Progenitors ;

and all *Subjects*, in whatsoever kind or degree of Subjection they are placed among Men, are here to be taught and instructed in their Duty which they owe to such as are Superiour to them. And our Catechism also brings in *Equals* ; for there are some who stand on even Ground, and in the same Rank with others, to whom also they owe a Duty in that Order. Now, though it is certain, that the Duties are mutual, yet they are not the same between Superiours and Inferiours : There is one sort of Duties, which God hath laid upon those whom he hath placed above others in Dignity or Authority ; and another sort of Duties required of such as God hath put below others ; and made to owe Submission or Subjection to them : And there are Duties distinct from either of these, which are incumbent on Equals, as such, between themselves ; and therefore all of these are to be taken apart, and handled by themselves severally. If therefore we would understand the Mind of this Command in the Latitude of it, our way is to enquire after the several Orders which God hath placed among Men ; and then enquire, what is the Expression of Honour which is appropriated to each of these, under the consideration of their standing so related, one to the other : And for this the Word of God is to be consulted ; and we must warily observe what Duties are common to *All Men*, as they are Men ; and what belong to the several particular respects which they bear one to another, with respect to Dignity, either Equal or Unequal : And here it may be observed, that one and the same Person, may bear divers Relations of Order, with regard to others, and that either to different Persons ; or sometimes to the same Person : Thus a *Queen*, may be both a Wife and a Subject to the *King* : A *Man* both a Husband and Subject to a *Queen* : A *Man* be both a Brother and a Servant to his Brother : Yea, One *Man* may be both Superiour and Inferiour to another, according to the different Order he stands in : Thus a *Man*, who bears no Office of Civil Authority on him, may be a Father to one who is in great place of Dignity ; and yet it is certain, that each of these Relations, hath it's Duties inseparable from it ; and the one doth not disannul or discharge from the other, but each ought in it's place duly to be observed. In the Investigation of these Duties, we must in each of them consider the *Relate*, and the *Correlate* in Conjunction ; because their mutual Duties do infer each other : And we may begin with those that stand in an *Inequality*, viz. *Superiours* and *Inferiours* ; because these are nextly and immediately pointed at in the Command. Now as the ground of the different Orders among Men, is for the due maintaining of Humane Societies, that they may be kept in a good State, and not be turned into a Rout ; *Man* being made a Sociable Creature, and his outward Happiness having a necessary Dependance on the Peaceableness of this Society ; it is therefore fit that every one do know his Rank and Station in it :

so there are several Orders between Men, made and appointed by God, the principal whereof, may be reduced to two heads, viz. *Natural*, and *Political*. I know others generally distribute them, into OEconomical and Political: But tho' I list not to contend about Terms, especially when the things themselves will amount to the same in the issue; yet I chuse rather to follow it, under this distribution. A brief account of each of these, may be taken in the further Prosecution of the Duties required by this Command; and First of the *Natural*.

[MAY, 4. 1703.]

SERMON CLXXVI.

First. I shall begin with that Order which God

and the Superiority over Children by virtue of the Relation, is in both jointly. And because they are but One in making the Relation, yet are Two distinct Persons, they are to be particularly referred to in this. For which reason the word of God mentions them severally, as in the Command, so else-where frequently. And because Children are too apt to slight their Mothers Authority, this is not put in Conjunction only, but sometimes mentioned Emphatically, *Prov. 6. 20. Lev. 19. 3.* Hence also Mothers have charge given them, and are reprov'd for neglect, and commended for fidelity in this regard, *2 Chron. 22. 3. Prov. 31. 1.* Now that we may take up a right conception of the Duties here peculiarly concerned, we may begin it at its rise, and so pursue it to the particulars, in the following Considerations,

1. THAT the foundation of this Relation, is