

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 hath placed between Mankind, that is *partly Natural*, and this is that which is placed between *Parents* and *Children*; and this may be called *Natural* not only because the light of Nature discovers the Relative Duties between these, for so it doth in all the rest, and they are to be read in the Nature or Quality of the Relations; but also because Nature it self hath made this Relation, and it abides the same Immutably in all Ages and Generations of the World: Nor can the intervention of any other Occasional and Political Relations cut off the Obligations that are fixed in this. Parents owe it to their Children, and Children to their Parents, as long as they live; and this may be the reason why it is expressly mention'd in the Command, rather than any other; it being a Pattern for every other; and the nearer resemblance they have to it, the more desirable and laudable: And for this reason all other Relations of Order, in which there is a Superiority and Inferiority, are so frequently set forth in the word of God, under these Titles, as we have before observed. Now tho' the Obedience of Children to their Parents, is only mentioned in the Command, yet because there are Reciprocal Duties between them, and the word of God hath laid down those as well as these, we may consider them severally: And here we may take a distinct account of the Honour which is due, and the Duties in which it is to be expressed between these. And tho' the neglect of Duty on one side, doth not discharge the other, because all Obedience is ultimately to have respect to the Authority of God; yet because there is great influence, by the suitable behaviour of one to the other, to draw forth a Reciprocal due carriage: And because the Superiours or Parents are supposed to have more Prudence in them than their Children, I shall begin with these. Hence,

I. PARENTS owe an Honour to their Children, and they are to manifest it by the discharge of Parental Duties to them. I use the word *Parents*, because the Command saith, *Thy Father and thy Mother*; and because Children do derive from both, as the Common Root or Stock, whereof they are the Branches. And therefore the Natural ground of the Relation,

and the Superiority over Children by vertue 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 *Natural Generation*. For it is by vertue of this that it is brought about, and that which makes these to be Father and Mother, and those to be their Children, is because those were begotten and born of these: so that this Natural Relation extends no further, or cannot be brought about in any other way; nor is it in the choice of Men, on either hand, to put off this Relation each to other, whilst both the terms of it do exist; this therefore is fully express'd in, *Prov. 23. 22, 25.*

2. THAT hence there is a peculiar Love Naturally deriving from Parents to their Children. There is a love to all Men, which is required of us, and without it we can discharge no Duty to them aright; hence it is the Sum of all Obedience, *Rom. 13. 9, 10. Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* But the Love of Parents to their Children is such as admits not of suitable words to express it, it being so intense and influential: so that God himself is pleased to resemble His Love to His Children by this, there being no Comparison that better resembleth it, *1 Sam. 10. 3. 13. 1 Sam. 49. 15.*

3. THAT from this Generation there flows a Natural right of Government unto Parents over their Children. This very thing gives them a claim to it, according to the Dictates of right reason. And on this account the Heathen Moralists were wont to place the reverencing of Parents, next to the worshipping of the Deity in their Natural Theology; accounting these two to be the prime and most radiant dictates of Mens Consciences, being written with Sunbeams in their hearts. So that as God challengeth Service from Men by the right of Creation, *Psal. 100. 1, 2. Deut. 32. 6.* In like manner the Duty of Obedience to Parents, is inculcated from their being so, *Prov. 31. 2.* Yea, God himself argueth with His People from this comparison, *Mal. 1. 6. A son honoureth his Father, and a servant his Master: if then I be Father, where is mine honour?*

4. THAT from the consideration of both these jointly, there ariseth a double sort of Duty, which Parents owe to their Children, viz. the Provision which they are to make for them, and the Government which they are to exercise over them.

them. And to these two may all the several Duties of Parents in that Relation be reduced, of which we may take a brief account :

[1.] *IT is the Duty of Parents to make Provision for their Children.* And for this it is, that God hath put those Natural Affections into them, which may prompt them so to do ; that they may with more delight discharge the Obligation lying upon them on this Account : And not to do it, is worse than brutish ; hence that Complaint, Lam. 4. 3. *Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones ; the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.* And this Care is to be used for them, both with respect to their *Outward* and *Inward* Man : Their *Bodies* and *Souls* belong unto this Charge incumbent on them.

(1.) WITH respect to their *Bodies* or outward Man : And the principal Duties here are,

1. *IN their Infancy tenderly to nourish them, till they are capable of providing for themselves.* Children are in their *Minority* altogether incapable of looking after themselves : There are no other sorts of Creatures equally shiftless, so that they must needs perish without a Compassionate looking after ; and for this God hath given Parents in Charge to do all the Offices of Love to them : We read, 1 Tim. 5. 8. *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* They are to carry them in their Arms, lay them in their Bosom, supply them with suitable Food and Raiment, watch to defend them from Mischief ; and to take care that they may want nothing for their supply of Food or Raiment, according to their Ability ; and all this with greatest tenderness ; 1 Thes. 2. 7.

2. *AS soon as may be, to take care for their bringing up, to bestir to Live in the World when Adult.* Children are not always to hang on their Mothers Breasts, and be nourished from their Father's Table, but to be usefull for their Own and the Publick Good ; as those who may in time be Parents, and have a like Charge. And it is a great Duty on Parents to see that they be fitted for this, that when they come to be for themselves, they may not be a Burden, but a Blessing to the Places they are in. For this reason early Endeavours are to be used with them : It is a Rule, Prov. 22. 6. *Train up a child in the way he should go : and when he is old he will not depart from it.* And the sooner this is done, the more likely are they to do it well, and much evil will be prevented. Whatsoever therefore is fit and needfull to prepare them for some Calling, is first and early to be taken care for ; and the least that can be is to see that they be taught to Read and Write, before such Time as they are of Age to be put out to a particular Calling, without which they cannot well engage in any ; and when they are so prepared, to provide some honest Occupation for them, which they may be instructed in, that so they may have a Calling to Live on, without which none can Live honestly : And because there are

many Callings of Use for Mankind, some more Liberal, others more Servile ; but all Commendable in themselves ; some one is to be chosen for them, which may best suit to their *Genius*, and the *Post* they bear among Men. And tho' Parents are prudently to observe the Inclination of their Children, and consider their Capacity ; yet they ought to have an over-ruling influence in this Affair : However, no Child is to be brought up without some Employment, by which he may be Serviceable ; for the Law saith, 2 Thes. 3. 10. *That if any would not work, neither should he eat.*

3. *WHILST* they are under their Wing, and at their Providing, *to allow them according to their Rank & Ability.* These *Two* must go together ; for God's Providence is to be observed and comported withal : Tho' Parents have a right to dispose of, yet Children have a right in their Estates, whereof God hath made Parents the Stewards ; and their Allowances to their Children, ought to be ordered with Discretion. Now God's Providence hath set Men in divers Stations among Men, and hath variously distributed of the things of this Life : And as it is a Sin and Folly for Men to live above their Ability, whatsoever Place they bear ; so it is a Duty to bring up Children suitably to their Rank, provided they keep within the compass of their Ability ; and for this end, they ought to keep a due Medium between sordid *Penuriousness*, and profuse *Lavishness* : And this Care is specially to be used by Parents in laying out according to their Ability, for the good Education of their Children, that they need not want it, by reason of their Covetousness.

4. *THE allowing of them a suitable Portion of their Estates.* It is the Duty of Parents to lay up for their Children, 1 Cor. 12. 14. And tho' God orders this as He pleaseth, and it is the Duty of Parents, to take care that they lay up nothing for their Posterity, but what is honestly gotten, lest they provide a Curse for them, and not a Blessing. Nevertheless, Parents ought by Frugality and Prudence, to lay by a Part of what they Gain, for their Children ; and distribute it to them according as there is Occasion : More particularly, when they dispose them in Marriage, that they may have something to begin upon : And when they come to Die, by disposing by *Will*, a due Proportion to every one of them, who have not before had it set off to them ; nor ought they to shew Partiality, much less to Disinherit any, upon any light occasion.

(2.) WITH respect to their *Souls* or inward Man. And this should be the main Care, tho' the other ought not to be neglected ; nor can their Love be regular, if they take up with the *Former*, and neglect *This*. And the Things that are mainly here to be observed are,

1. *TO take care that they be Baptized in their Infancy.* Baptism is a Seal of Initiation in the Covenant of Grace ; and tho' it be an External Seal, and the Efficacy of it depends upon the free Grace of God ; yet it is the Duty of Parents to seek this for their Children, because God hath

hath required it; and hereby they are openly dedicated to God, and brought under the Duties and Priviledges of the New-Covenant: We are assured that Baptism comes in the room of Circumcision, Col. 2. 11, 12. *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.* And we find how strict God's injunction was for that, in Gen. 17. 14. *And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant.*

2. TO be early instructing them in the ways of God, and counselling them about the Affairs of their Souls. And in nothing can they more shew their true Love to them; and all their Care for their Outward Man is little in comparison of this, and insignificant without it; so true is that, Matth. 16. 26. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Children are born without any seeds of the knowledge of the true Religion in them; yea filled with corrupt Principles of Error, Ignorance, and Enmity: Parents therefore ought to begin betimes to infill into them the Knowledge of the Truths of the word of God, and tell them their natural miserable Estate; and use earnest endeavours to persuade them to seek God early, that if possible they may be Converted to God in their Infancy: We read, 2 Tim. 3. 15. *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.* And doubtless this was by the careful Instruction of his Parents: Hence that, Chap. 1. 5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.* And herein Parents ought to suit their Instructions to the Capacity of their Children; 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2. And this is to be done on all suitable Occasions; see, Prov. 4. *begin.*

3. CAREFULLY to set before them a good Example, both in Words & Carriages. Examples have a great influence upon Men, especially of such whom they have a particular respect for. And Children in their Minority, ordinarily observe, none more than their Parents, and will readily learn of their ways: And tho' it is true, that they will more readily learn Sin than Holiness, it being that which the Corrupt Nature byasseth them to; yet God ordinarily blesteth this cautiousness to good Effect; and Parents will have Peace in this at last, whatsoever the event be.

4. TO be ever Commending them to God, by incessant and importunate Prayer. This should attend all their other Endeavours with and for them, inasmuch as the Success entirely depends on the Blessing of God for them, which they ought thus to commend to him: They should Pray with them on this account; and endeavour

to let them see how deeply their Souls are concerned for them, as well as thus set them a good Pattern of Prayer, and in their secret Applications to Heaven, to carry them to God, and with greatest wrestlings to strive for a Blessing on them; to be often Praying for every one of them, and saying to God as *Abraham*, Gen. 17. 18. *O that Ishmael might live before thee!* And such ought to be their solicitude on this account, that whatsoever slip their mind in particular, yet this may be never forgotten that God would Bless their Children, and derive the Everlasting Blessings of the Covenant to them, according to the Promise, Psal. 103. 17, 18. *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto childrens children: To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*

[2.] IT is the Duty of Parents to exercise a Parental Government over their Children. That God hath committed such a Government to them, and requires it of them, the Scripture abundantly testifies: Nay, the very Light of Nature discovers it, and their Necessity calls for it: And this is distinct both from Civil and Ecclesiastical Government, tho' there be a resemblance between them. That this Government is not Despotical or Arbitrary, is certain; for tho' they are more left at liberty to exercise their Prudence in the Administration of it; yet there are Limits set to it in the word of God, and Rules laid down, which prescribe the Duties of it, in the Compass whereof they are to contain themselves. And here let us observe, that this Government peculiarly respects their Non-age, or the time wherein they are not come to govern themselves, and set up Families of their own; tho' then also they are to exercise a suitable Parental Authority in some Cases. And here two general Rules may be offered,

(1.) THEY ought to maintain their Authority, by avoiding the extremes of Rigour & Indulgence. As Children are not to be treated either as Brutes or Slaves, so neither with overfondness, and letting them enjoy their Wills in every thing: hence that Rule given, Eph. 6. 4. *Fathers provoke not your Children to wrath.* They are so to Love them, as to let them know their Place; and so also to Rule them, as to let them know their Paternal Affection to them. They must be neither too Familiar with them, lest they despise their Authority, and wrest it from them; nor too much Estrange themselves from them, lest they be discouraged; and think themselves Disregarded: And great Discretion is here to be used, according to their divers Tempers and Dispositions.

(2.) THEY ought to attempt their Government according to the Age and Capacity of their Children. There is a Childish Age, in which they are not arrived at the use of their Reason with Discretion, which afterwards they arrive to, and they are to be Governed accordingly: This is plainly intimated in Gal. 4. *begin.* And indeed they will never be so fit to Govern their Children,

if they be not taught to obey their Parents. There is Instruction which is accommodated to their rational Powers, and Correction which is to be applied to their Senses; and there is great Prudence here to be us'd. Correction is never to be administred without Instruction; for then it will likely lose the End of it. Hence the *Hebrew* and *Greek* Language have one and the same Word for both, both being designed for Reformation. Correction is not ordinarily to be us'd, when Conviction by reproof, will as well obtain the End. Horses, Asses, and Fools, are the proper subjects of such Discipline, *Prov.* 26. 3. Though in some Notorious faults it is to be applied, for the warning of other Children to take heed to themselves. Instruction is oftner to be applied than Correction. It must not be always a Word and a Blow: Nor may Correction be administred in a Passion, but with a Meek and Sedate Spirit, that they may be made to read Love in it, and know that it is done for their good, and upon necessity. As therefore they grow up to a Capacity, they are to be treated more with reason, unless they remain fools and incorrigible, without Severity.

NOW the things in which Parents are more particularly, to exercise their Authority over their Children, whilst they are under their Watch, are such as these,

1. *THEY* are to regulate them in their Works and Recreations. They are to be fitted for, and brought up to some Calling, that they may be useful in their Generation; and yet there are Recreations, to be allowed them for Diversions. Hence that is promised as a blessing, *Zech.* 8. 5. *And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.* But Children have no discretion to order themselves in this regard, and therefore are to have their Parents order in it; and that there are so many Children brought up in Idleness, and spend their whole time in Play, is the Parents fault, and a neglect of the Authority which God hath vested them withal. They are to set them their business, and see that they attend it; whether in attending Schools for their Instruction, or applying themselves to labour, when fit for it; or in putting them out to such Callings, as they judge most convenient for them; this is implied in, *Prov.* 23. 6.

2. *THEY* ought to compell them to keep Family Order. There must be Orders in every Family, where there are Parents and Children, else God will be dishonoured by them: and no Child in a Family, of what Age soever, is to think himself discharged from them. One such Person in a Family, will put all into a rout. Parents themselves ought therefore to be exemplary to their Children in this, else they will teach them disorder. There are seasons for the Worship of God, seasons for Meats, seasons for Natural Rest, and preparing themselves for it. And Parents ought not to indulge their Children in a practical neglect of these; but to appoint the Ordinary seasons for these things, and use their Authority over their Children for complying there-with-all.

3. *THEY* ought to exercise Authority over them, in regard to their Company. As Man's Nature enclines him to be Sociable, so the Con-nate Corruption in fallen Man, disposeth him to evil Society; and Children early discover the Naughtiness of their hearts in this regard, by associating themselves, with such as are lewd; and are apt, very uneasily to submit themselves to be under restraint in this regard: But as Parents have an Authority, so in nothing can they more express their Love to their Children, than in using it to lay a restraint upon them. We read, *Prov.* 13. 20. *He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.* How watchful therefore ought they to be in this regard? Hence the solemn Charge given to a Son, *Prov.* 1. 10. *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* And 23. 19, 20. *Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not amongst riotous eaters of flesh.* And as these Instructions are given with Authority, so that Authority is to be used in Prosecution of them.

4. *THEY* should also govern them in their Attendance upon the Publick Ordinances of Worship. As their principal Care ought to be for their Souls; so, because God hath ordained the Ordinances of His House, to be the ordinary Means of Salvation, it is their Duty to Command them, and see that they are Obedied in this Matter. Hence that, *Gen.* 18. 19. *For I know him, that he will command his Children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* And here, as they are to see that they do attend, and not keep from the Ordinances, (for which reason it is most convenient, that they frequent the same Assembly with their Parents, especially till they come to be at Discretion to make a wise Choise for themselves,) so they ought carefully to restrain them, from such Assemblies, where Heretical Doctrines are taught, or Superstitious Worship is practised; that so they may not imbibe those things in their Youth, which will be hard to eradicate afterwards.

5. *THEY* ought to exercise a prudent Authority in the disposal of them in Marriage This is the most Momentous Change, that befalls Persons in their whole Lives: And that Parents have right in the Ordering of it, the very Moral Heathen were perswaded, by the light of Nature. The care of *Abraham*, and of *Isaac* and *Rebecca* upon this account, are commended to us in the Word of God, for our Imitation: And tho' neither Reason nor Religion allows Parents to put a force on their Children in this matter, inasmuch as they cannot put Conjugal Affection into their Children, without which that Relation will not be an Happiness, but a Misery; yet their Advice and Direction is to be used, and their Consent is to be had ordinarily, except by their sordid and brutish Carriage, they necessitate their Children to seek redress from higher Powers. And more peculiarly are they to exert this Authority in forbidding, and as much as in them lies preventing, their being unequally yoked with Persons that are of another Religion.

Religion. There were therefore a Moral Reason in that Law given by *Moses*, Deut. 7. 3, 4. *Neither shalt thou make Marriages with them; thy Daughter thou shalt not give unto his Son, nor his Daughter shalt thou take unto thy Son. For they will turn away thy Son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.* And to one of the fore-cited Heads, may be reduced, whatever particular Precepts are given in the word of God, on this account.

U S E. AND to quicken Parents to these Duties, Let us consider that God requires it of our hands, and will call us to an account for the Children so put under our Charge: Their well-being in this World, and another, hath no little concern in it; and our own Comfort or Sorrow in them: God is wont ordinarily to bless faithfulness in this regard with good success, and we may hope to live in them honourably when we are gone, and to meet them again with Joy, in the Great Day.

[JUNE, 1. 1703.]

SERMON CLXXVII.

IT THERE is an Honour which Children

are accountable to the Civil Powers for their injuring their Children; and in some cases to repair to them, for Justice against Rebelious and Contumacious Children, as God appointed in Israel: and every well ordered Government allows unto Children a relief against the Unreasonable Treatments of Unnatural Parents.

2. THAT God hath a Supreme Power over both Parents and Children. They are equally under His Government, & obliged to Obey His Commands; He having and using Authority to prescribe Duties, and give Laws to them. Though the reason of the Authority of Parents, and Subjection of Children, is laid in the Relation itself, yet God himself is the Law-giver unto both; and He alone is the absolute Sovereign over the whole Creation: Tho' Parents have a Command over their Children, yet God Commands them both, and one as well as the other, is to seek the Law at His Mouth.

3. THAT hence Children are bound equally with their Parents to Obey God, and must be called to an Account before Him for it. They labour of a mistake, who think that God hath so subjected Children to their Parents, that they are not to enquire further into their Duty, than the Pleasure of their Parents; and that if these lay, any sinful Commands on their Children, they are without further enquiry to perform them; and that not They, but only their Parents are