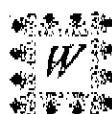



S E R M O N CLXXXVIII.

QUESTION LXV.

 *HAT is forbidden in the Fifth Commandment?*

A N S W E R.

 **T**HE Fifth Commandment forbiddeth, Neglecting of, or doing any thing against, the Honour and Duty, which belongeth to every one in their several Places and Relations.

IT is a general Rule, That when *Precepts* are understood, the *Sins* against them are Rationally inferred: *Rectum est index sui et Obliqui*. And it is counted sufficient, in the laying down the Doctrine of any *Science*, to give the *Positive* Precepts or Canons which belong to it: But in the Doctrine of *Religion*, it is therefore not enough only to lay down what is *True*, but also to discover *Error*; not barely to tell what is *Duty*, but also to point out what is *Sin*, by reason of the Pravity and Indisposition of our Corrupt Natures, which are too apt to call *Evil Good*, and *Good Evil*, &c. *Isa.* 5. 20. Nevertheless, Having more distinctly laid open the several *Duties* contained under the *Precept*, I shall very briefly pass over the *Negative* part of it.

WE have also *formerly* considered, That a Command may be broken in *Two* regards, *viz.* Either by *not* doing the things *required* in it; or by *doing* the things which are *contrary* to it: Accordingly our *answer* tells us, That in this Command is *forbidden*, both the *neglect* of, and the *doing* that which is against, the Honour and Duty, which is due *to* and *from* Persons, in that Order and Relation which God hath placed them in: When the Relation is not acknowledged, and the Respect belonging to it, is not paid, but a contrary Carriage is expressed.

I shall here wave the *distinct* Consideration of the *Sins of Omission*, by which this Precept is violated, inasmuch as the *not* doing of the things before mentioned as *Duties*, fully discovers them. And as to the *Sins of Transgression*, or Violation offered to this Command,

some brief Intimations may suffice: And we may take them up in the Order wherein we considered them under the *former* Answer.

First, *PARENTS* are guilty of Transgressing this Command;

1. **WHEN** they deny their Children suitable Maintenance, according to their Part and Ability. We are told, *2 Cor.* 12. 14. *For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.* When therefore they do withhold from them, that which is due, and within their Power, they certainly discourage them, which ought not to be; *Col.* 3. 11. And we are told, *1 Tim.* 5. 8 *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.*

2. **WHEN** they withhold from them the Means of *Spiritual Good*. Parents are mainly concerned for the *Souls* of their Children: When therefore they not only neglect their Instruction, but also restrain them from the Opportunities and Advantages of Saving Knowledge; will not allow them Time to Read the Scriptures, to Attend upon the Means of Grace, to Wait upon Catechising, which is peculiarly designed for the acquainting of *Young Ones* with Saving Truths; they Transgress this Command, which requires, that they bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, *Eph.* 6. 4.

3. **WHEN** they bring them up with over-*send* Indulgence. There is a Government of Children, which belongs unto Parents by a Natural Right; and God requires it of them; and if we part with it, and suffer them to have their Wills in all things, and they must not have a Check or Reproof, they sinfully Omit their Duty. This was the thing Charged upon *David*, in regard of *Adonijah*, *1 Kings* 1. 6. *His father had not displeas'd him at any time, in saying, why hast thou done so?*

4. **WHEN** (on the other hand) they treat them with Cruelty. Bitter Carriages to Children is unnatural; and must needs offer great Discouragement to them, and provoke them to take unhandſome Courses, contrary to *Col.* 3. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your Children to anger lest they be discouraged.* Nay sometimes that which will not consist with the Discovery of Parental Love, is here a Fault.

5. WHEN they Command them to do things that are Sinful. This is one way, in which we may be Partakers in other Mens Sins, and Contract the Guilt of them to our selves: Nor can Parents shew more want of Love to their Children, than to be their Advisers & Instructors in such things as are Breaches of God's Holy Law, and thereby exposing themselves to God's Holy Anger: Herein *Rebeckah* was unkind to *Jacob*, &c. and he smarted for it, *Gen.* 27.

6. WHEN they set them an Evil Example. Children are apt to Imitate their Parents, and in nothing more than in things that are Evil, to which their Corrupt Natures incline. When Parents will Swear, Curse, keep Evil Company, live Idly, be Drunk, and neglect Religious Orders in their Families; no thank to them, if their Children do not take after them, or do worse. It is Recorded, *1 Kings* 22. 52. *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother; and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.* And, *2 Kings* 8. 27. *2 Chron.* 22. 3, 4.

7. WHEN they withhold from them reasonable Marriage: And that either by forbidding them, or with-holding due Encouragement from them. The Laws of all Civiliz'd Nations, have provided a Remedy against this; and many Tragical things have been the Just Punishments of this Unnatural Carriage of Parents.

Secondly, CHILDREN tender themselves guilty of the Breach of this Commandment; when,

1. THEY Rebel against their Parents Lawful Commands. The Command for this, is abundantly urged in the Word of God; and the very Light of Nature discovers it: So that what their Parents do Lawfully Command them, they cannot without Sin refuse Obedience unto. It was Impudence in the Son, who, when his Father bad him go to Labour in his Vineyard, said, *I go not, i. e. I will not go;* *Matth.* 21. 18.

2. WHEN they Despise and carry themselves insolently towards their Parents. This is contrary to the Honour which God hath required: Hence this is Cautioned against, in *Prov.* 23. 22. *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and Despise not thy mother when she is old.* And severely Threatned, *Chap.* 30. 17. *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.* Parents have their Infirmities; and as they grow in Years they will increase; and for Children to Scorn them for this, is Brutish.

3. WHEN they break from Family Government, and keep no Orders. They come and go when they will; keep what Company they please; and Absent themselves as they please, at all Hours of the Day or Night; and will not be restrained by all the fair Means that can be used with them, being Impatient of all Subjection: God hath appointed a severe

Law against such as these; *Deut.* 21. 18, 19, & onwards.

4. WHEN they Rob them of, or Prodigally Waste their Estates. Parents ought to Nourish their Children: But the disposal of this is in their hand; and Children have not the liberty to take and spend at their Pleasure. And it is not only a real Robbery, but also a despising of their Parents Authority; Hence forbidden, *Prov.* 19. 26. *He that wasteth his father, and chafeth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.*

5. WHEN they Neglect the Care of their Parents, who are brought to Necessity: They harden their Hearts against them; and will rather suffer them to Perish, than afford them the necessary Succours, which their Condition calls for: This also directly crosseth the Precept of God, *1 Tim.* 5. 16. *If any man or woman that believeth, have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.*

Thirdly, HUSBANDS and Wives may break this Command.

And that,

I. IN regard of the Joynt Duties, that are in Common between them.

1. WHEN they Live in Discord. When they maintain Quarrels one with another; and at all times Provoke each other: This is contrary to that Conjugal Love, which is the Bond of that State, which obligeth them carefully to please one another, *1 Cor.* 7. 33, 34.

2. WHEN they withstand each other in the Government of the Family. These have a joynt Care of the Education of their Children, and maintenance of Authority over their Family; and when they Disagree, and what the one doth, the other undoeth, or withstands; what can this tend to, but the subverting of Family Government; and thwarts the Duty of upholding each others Authority.

3. WHEN they are False to the other. When they break the Marriage Bond, and defile the Marriage Bed, and thereby dishonour one another. This also comes under the Seventh Command; but we here observe it, as inconsistent with that Conjugal Love which is required in this Command, against which God's Law was very severe.

II. IN respect to the Duties proper to Each of these.

Here,

[1.] HUSBANDS are Chargeable with Sin against this Command;

1. WHEN they carry it bitterly to, and insultingly over, their Wives. When instead of making them their Companions, they treat them as Slaves; and make their Condition fordid and very uneasy; contrary to the Precept, *Col.* 3. 19. *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.* And *1 Pet.* 3. 7.

2. WHEN instead of taking Care for their Comfortable Support, they spend their Time and Estate in Riotous Living. It is a general Rule, *1 Tim.* 5. 8. *If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied*

denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. And the Wife hath a peculiar Interest in this. And if the Husband either Lives Idly, or Wastes that which should be for her Comfort, in Drinking, Gaming, or any other Leud Course, he is Guilty.

[2.] THE Wife is here also Guilty ;

1. WHEN she usurps Authority over her Husband, and tramples upon his Authority. When she despiseth him in her Heart, and insults over him in her Carriage, and is never Content with any of his Administrations ; but is always finding Fault, and Contradicting him : Such a Wife was Jezebel.

2. WHEN she makes a Slave of him, to maintain her Pride & Prodigality. She cannot be content with his Condition ; but instead of Sobriety, she must be Equal in things with her Neighbours, or he shall have no quiet living.

3. WHEN she refuseth to do her Part, for the preserving of the Order and Support of the Family. She regards not how things are Wasted ; and counts herself to be too Good, to use Care and Industry in her place ; and matters not what goes to Rack, so she may Live in Idleness. This is contrary to the Character of a Vertuous Woman, Prov. 31. 11, &c.

Fourthly, THIS Command may be broken, either by Masters or Servants.

(1.) MASTERS may render themselves Guilty in this ;

1. WHEN they carry themselves Cruelly to their Servants. It is a Command, Eph. 6. 9. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening. And this Cruelty is exercised in Words, when they Treat them as Dogs, and give them all scornful Titles, as if they were Creatures of another Species ; threaten them with all severe Menaces : And indeed, Partly by with-holding from them, their due Support of Life, allowing neither for Food or Raiment that which is convenient : Partly by exacting Labour of them, beyond their Strength and Ability : Partly also, by barbarous using of them with Blows. All Inhumanity in these regards, is a woful Usurpation upon this Relation, contrary to, Col. 4. 1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.

2. WHEN they will not afford them the Means, for their spiritual and saving Good. They will not instruct them at all, nor give them Time to Read, Hear and Learn those things, by which they may be instructed in the way to Eternal Life : Nay possibly, keep them back purposely from such Advantages. This is contrary to the Practice of Abraham, Gen. 18. 19. These forget the Account they must give to God another Day, of their Servants Souls.

(2.) SERVANTS will here also be found Faulty ;

1. WHEN they Resist, and rise up against their Master's Authority : Either refusing to do what they lawfully require of them, (for doubtless, Masters are not to be Obeyed in any Sin,) or by murmuring at their Service, and doing

it against their Wills ; or by refusing to submit themselves to due Correction for the Faults by which they have deserved it ; contrary to the Command, 1 Pet. 2. 18.

2. WHEN they are Unfaithful to their Masters and do them wrong. And that, either in their Time, by Idling it away, or Running away, or by employing it for themselves, to their Master's loss and damage ; by Working deceitfully, and only with Eye-service, which is forbidden, Col. 3. 22. Or by Pilching and Purloining, wronging them in their Estates, either by spending it upon their Lusts, or taking it to themselves to make an Estate of ; contrary to Tit. 2. 10.

Fifthly, THIS Command may be Transgressed, both by the Aged and Younger Persons as such.

1. AGED Persons are here Guilty, when they set an Evil Example before the Younger, in their Conversation. And this is, When in any thing they Live contrary to the Character, Tit. 2. 2. That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. * For Old Persons to be Intemperate, and given to Excess in Drink, (which is a thing too frequent,) it is a vile Reproach to them ; to see them Covetous and Scraping, as if they were to Live here forever, or would carry something away ; to have them Swear, Curse, take God's Name in vain, is an ill Sight, and a miserable Example : Well then might the Wife Man use that limitation, Prov. 16. 31. The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

2. YOUNGER Persons break this Command, by a Contemptuous Carriage toward those that are Aged. When they Despise them for their Age, which doth it self call for a Respect ; or carry it Insolently towards them for the Infirmities, (whether Natural or Moral,) which they labour of ; when they despise that Precept, Levit. 19. 32. Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God : I am the Lord. When they think themselves Wiser than the Ancients, and so scorn their Advice ; laugh at them for their Piety, and shew Contempt to them for their grave Instructions ; and with Reboboam, forsake the Counsel of the O'd Men ; and are so far from following their Good Example, that they make a Mock, or Scoff at it.

Sixthly, THIS may be Considered respecting Magistrates and Subjells.

(1.) THE Civil Magistrate may here be Guilty ;

1. BY Enacting of Evil Laws. We read, Psal. 94. 20. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law. And these may be Evil, which either Ratify a False Worship, or tend to the Suppression of that which is Right : As also whatsoever are Unjust, and contrary to the Civil Happiness of a People, or Subversive of those Liberties and Immunities, which by the Law of Nature belong unto them.

2. BY

2. *BY Tyranny over their Subjects*: Which is exercised, when Men in Power, without Law, invade the Liberties and Properties of the Subjects; and thereby Oppress them: When they Usurp an Arbitrary Government, and make their own Will their Law, in whatsoever may gratify their Ambition or Covetousness. This is express in that Warning given to *Israel*, 1 Sam. 8. 11, &c.

3. *BY wresting of Judgment*. This belongs to the Executive Power: When the Laws are either Superfeded; or by perverse Glosses and Misinterpretations improved to *wrong* the Innocent, and *favour* the Nocent; when Good Men shall be injured, and Ill Men favoured: Hence that, Lam. 3. 36. *To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.*

(2.) *SUBJECTS* do notoriously Sin against this Command;

1. *BY a Contemptuous Carriage towards their Persons & Government*. When their Authority is despised, and their Laws disregarded; and Men without regard, break their Good and Just Laws: What is this but to reproach the Government, contrary to that Subjection, Rom. 13. 1.

2. *BY murmuring against, or speaking Evil of Rulers, even the Best*: Yea, often the Best are most uneasy to a People, and they cannot bear them; and nothing can please them, but these must be Reviled as if they were the Plagues of the Place. This is a thing which is improved, Jude ver. 8. *And speak evil of dignities.*

3. *BY Insurrection & Rebellion*. In what Case a People Oppressed by their Rulers may with-stand the Oppression, is not a thing I now Dispute: But for them upon every Dispute, Tumultuously to Rise, and throw all into Confusion, is a thing no way warrantable; but provoking to God.

4. *BY fraudulent with-holding of their Just Tribute, for the Upholding of Government*: In what Cases the Subject may hide from Knowledge, what the Law exacts, I will not here Enquire, it being a nice Case; but God hath made it a Duty, Rom. 13. 7. *Custom is whom custom is due.* And *Fraud* here is a Sin.

Seventhly, *MINISTERS* also, and *Church-Members*, are here Concerned.

(1.) *MINISTERS* may notoriously break this Command;

1. *BY Preaching & Instilling of False Doctrines*. Hereby they do what in them lies, to destroy the Souls that are under their Charge, whose Duty is express, Jer. 2. 17. *And I will give you pastors after mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge & understanding.* Such Preachers are therefore called the *Ministers of satan*, 2 Cor. 11. 15.

2. *BY an Evil Conversation*. They are to be Examples to their Flock, and Preach by their *Lives*, as well as by their *Doctrines*: When therefore they lead unright Lives, and contradict their *preaching* by their *Practice*; they do not show that Love of Souls, which they ought to do, *Paul* could say, 1 Cor. 11. 1.

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

3. *BY their taking other Employments, which hinder them from discharging their Duty*. Their Duty is to be in these things, to make their Ministry their Calling; if therefore they lose themselves in other Business, which unavoidably takes them off from this; it is their Sin, 2 Tim. 2. 4.

4. *BY Usurping a Power over their Flock, which Christ hath not vested them withal*. There is a Power which they ought to assert; but a Domination is not granted them; and if they assume it, they become Guilty. 1 Pet. 5. 3. *Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

(2.) *CHURCH-MEMBERS* may break this Command;

1. *BY assuming to themselves an Authority which belongs not to them*. When they Challenge a Liberty to themselves, which is Subversive of the Authority of the Eldership; and do not Submit to the Regular Government of their Elders, contrary to, Heb. 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves: 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.*

2. *BY disorderly Rejecting the Relation which they bear to their own Elders*: As if they were entirely at their own Liberty, to rend themselves away, without any regard had to those whom the Holy Ghost hath made their Overseers; which tends to the Ruin of Church-Order.

3. *BY with-holding from them their Comfortable & Honourable Subsistence*. When they thus Oppress them and their Families; and drive them from their proper Work, to seek their own Support, without which they must suffer Hunger and Want; contrary to, 1 Cor. 9. 14. *Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel.*

4. *BY maintaining continual Brawls & Contentions with their Ministers*. Always finding Fault with their Administrations, and seeking to undermine them; which is to Discourage them in their Work; and Contradictory to that Honour which they ought to pay them.

Eighthly, *THERE* is a Breach in this Command, between those that are *Well-Deserved*, and such as are of a *Lower Degree*.

1. *WHEN the former carry it unworthy of their Progenitors, and that Honourable Birth they are Owners of*: When they are a Disgrace rather than a Credit, to their Birth and Education.

2. *WHEN the latter Despise, and cast Contempt on the other*: This proceeds from a *Levelling Spirit*; a disowning the Difference, which God's Providence hath made.

Ninthly, *BOTH Rich and Poor* may be here Guilty.

1. *THE Rich*: When either they *Despise* the Poor for their Poverty, wherein they cast Reproach upon their Maker; or when they refuse to *Relieve* the Poor, out of the Liberal Portion

Portion, which God hath put into their hands, whereby they withhold from God that which is His due, and He hath required.

2. **THE Poor**: When they either *Envy* the Prosperity of their Neighbours, which contradicts the Love they should bear to them, or are *Ungrateful* for all the Kindnesses they receive from them.

Tenthly, **THERE** is a Fault here, both in those that *Excell* in *Gifts*, and such as are *Inferiour* in them.

1. **WHEN** the former withhold, and will not improve them for the Good of the other; contrary to 1 Cor. 12. 7. *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

2. **WHEN** the latter scorn to be instructed by the other, but *Dispise* them: And particularly, when such are not regarded in Election to Places of Service, but laid aside; and others that are no way fit, are preferred before them.

Eleventhly, **THIS** Command is Transgressed by *Equals*;

1. **WHEN** Neighbours *Live together Un-neighbourly*. When they maintain Estrangement among themselves, Live in Quarrels and Strife, deny one another Neighbourly Kindnesses, seek to Undermine one another in their

Affairs; and instead of doing *Good*, do *Hurt* to each other.

2. **SPECIAL** Friends are Guilty of *Transgression*, when they do any thing that is contrary to that near Bond of Society; and tends to hinder the Ends and Benefits of it. More peculiarly, When they *Desert* their Friend, in a Time of *Adversity*, which most of all calls for their *standing* by him; when they *Betray* each others *Secrets*, & thereby expose them to Disgrace and Mischief: When they do not faithfully and seasonably *Advise* one another; but on the other hand, give Advice or Encouragement to that which is *Sinful*, and will expose them to God's Anger, and Suffering in the World: When instead of maintaining each other's Reputation, they undermine and expose each other, by entertaining *Calumnies* against them, or publishing their *Infirmities* to others.

THESE, and whatsoever else of like Nature, are the *Transgressions* of the *Fifth* Command: By which we are taught what need Christians have to be very *Wary* to themselves, lest in one Relation or other, they Violate the Command, and procure God's Displeasure.

[M A Y 30. 1704.]

S E R M O N (LXXXIX.