

THE  
Duty of PARENTS,  
TO  
Instruct their CHILDREN:  
Being the Substance of Several  
SERMONS

Preach'd at *Cainboy*, in the Province of  
*South-Carolina*, Anno Dom. 1727.

Now Contracted into One DISCOURSE.

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*By Josiah Smith, M. A.*

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Psal. 34. 11. *Come, ye Children, hearken unto me; I  
will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

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B O S T O N: Printed for D. HENCHMAN in  
Cornhil, MDCCXXX.



# P R E F A C E.

*THE Reason why this Discourse now goes to the Press, is, that I tho't it would be useful, and necessary.*

*When I came first to Cainhoy, I found the Dissenting Interest declining; the Pious Aged but few, and the Youth, tho' numerous, generally ignorant, and neglected, and in a fair way to become vicious, and corrupt in their Morals. This observation was affecting to a Minister; and I could think of no Remedy so likely under GOD, to reform, and strengthen the things, which remained, and were ready to dye, as to preach, and press the duty of Parents to their Children; to lay down the Matter, Method, and Reasons of their instruction. This I did, to the length of several Sermons, from this Text; but finding the impression of them to wear off, and, that it very much arose from the temptations of a Tavern, with some, and the infection of Evil Company, with others: I first, very freely, declared my sentiments upon the abuse, and pernicious consequence, of Strong Drink, and then applyed those words in Prov. I. 10. to Parents, and Children, with all the closeness, and pungency of Expression, I was master of.*

*After such repeated endeavours, I was in hopes, my wishes might be answered: but time has seemed, not only to erase the impression, but to bury the remembrance of*

of such Subjects; and I can think of no way now to revive them, but the Press, and have, accordingly, spent some time, and been at some pains, to contract the Sermons, and to put them into the form of three continued Discourses; which I determine to publish together: and if the Religious Ends I propose in the publication of them, not only to the People of Cainhoy, (for whom they are primarily intended) but to the late People of my Charge in Bermuda, and to all others, in the same circumstances; shall be accomplish'd, I shall have little regard, notwithstanding my Youth, to the general imputation of Vanity.

The Intelligent Reader will observe, a great Affinity in the Subjects, and will therefore forgive my repeating the same things, in different Discourses, delivered at such different times; it being impossible, to avoid some repetition, without a manifest Injury, both to the Subject it self, and to the design I had, in making it Publick.

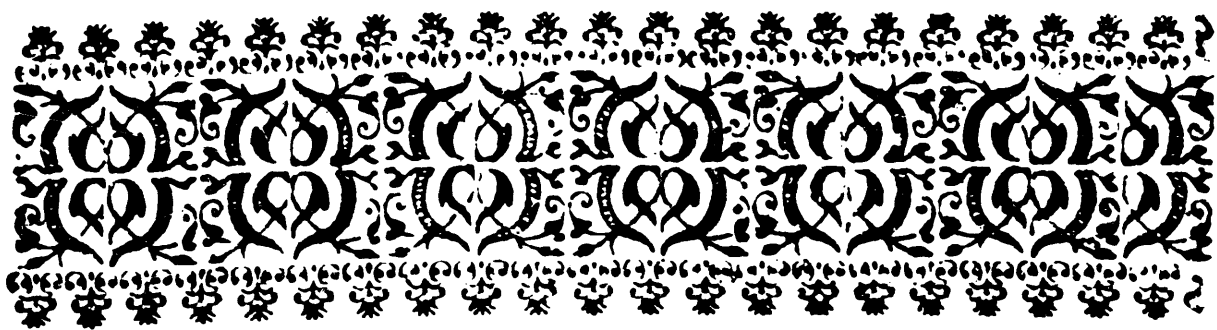
May the Father of Lights, without whom, Paul is nothing, and Apollos is nothing, give the Increase, and take the Glory.

Cainhoy. Jan. 19th.

1729, 30.

Josiah Smith.





# The Duty of PARENTS, to Instruct their CHILDREN.



PROV. XXII. 6.

*Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

THE Book of *Proverbs* abounds in a great variety of wholesome, and instructive Lessons; but without that Connection, observable in most other parts of the Sacred Writings. One of these Excellent Sentences we have now before us; representing the great Duty of *Parental* Instruction. *Train up a Child &c.* The original word, when it speaks of Persons, is observed to signify, *Catechetical* Instruction. Or, to initiate a Youth in something, he was ignorant of before; Every Youth, more or less is such an *Ignoramus*. The Parent is therefore exhorted to train him up *in the way he should go*: According to his *Capacity*, or course of

of Life ; or ( which comes nearest the *Hebrew* Phrase ) in the *beginning* of his way : His tender Years, and Youth ; when less habituated to corrupt Practice, and more apt to take the Impressions of Precept and Example ; *And when he is old, he will not depart from it.* ( i. e. ) This is the *natural*, and *usual* fruit of early Instruction ; what we may expect and presume upon.

The Words run into *two Propositions.*

PROP. 1. 'Tis the Duty of Parents, to train up their Children in the way they should go.

PROP. 2. When they are old, they will not depart from it.

PROP. 1. 'Tis the *Duty* of Parents, to train up their Children in the way they should go.

Under this Proposition, I propose three Things.

viz.

1. To shew the *Matter* of Instruction, the way, in which Children should go ; or the great Lessons, which Parents should teach them.

2. The *Methods* of instruction, *how* they should teach them.

3. The *Reasons* of the Duty.

(1.) As to the *Matter* of Instruction. We should before teach our Children the following Lessons.  
Viz.

1. The Nature of GOD. The Relations he sustains to them, and the Duties they owe Him. That God is a *Spirit*, a simple, active, intelligent Being : An *infinite* Spirit that fills Heaven and Earth, with his Presence : *Eternal*, from Everlasting, to Everlasting GOD ; and *Unchangeable*. The Father of Lights, with whom is no Variation nor Shadow of turning. That He is thus Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable not only in his *Being*, but in all his essential Perfections : His *Wisdom*, *Power*, *Holiness*, *Justice*, *Goodness*,  
and

and *Truth*. Nor must we forget to tell our Children, the *Relation* they stand in to GOD ; That He has *made* them, and not they themselves ; That He by His kind Visitation *preserves* their Spirits in Life : That He has fed and clothed, nourished and brought them up, and they always depend upon His gracious Providence, for every Breath and every Mercy ; and that He is the Lord their *Redeemer*. --- We must likewise teach them, the *Duty* they owe to this *Best* of Beings, as it flows and Results from these Relations ; That as they live in Him, so they should live to Him, to His Praise and Glory, when they eat and drink or whatever they do ; that as they depend upon Him they should beware of Him, and not provoke Him. And that since they are bought with a Price, they should *glorify* Him with their Bodies and with their Spirits which are His.

2. Next to the Nature of GOD, we should teach them their *own*.

1. The *Capacity* of it.

That they have living, immaterial, intelligent, and immortal Souls ; Created at first, but little lower than the Angels, knowing more than the Fowls of Heaven, and having Understanding above the Beasts of the Earth : Souls of great Capacity ; capable of the knowledge and fruition of *God*, tho' infinitely below Him.

2. The first and great *design* of their Creation.

That the Great and Wise Creator formed them for His own *Praise*, made them the mouth of the Dumb Creation, to Celebrate His Wisdom, Power, and God-Head, shining so bright in the frame of Nature ; that from the Creature they should ascend to the knowledge of the Creator ; to *Glorify* Him on Earth, and to *Enjoy* Him in Heaven.

3. We should teach them, how this Capacity was *Abused* ; this End *Perverted*, and their Natures *Depraved*, and their Souls *Exposed* by *Adam's* Transgression

We are to instruct our Children in the Covenant of *Works* ; the first Violation of it, and the Guilt and Pollution springing from it : That they were Represented in *Adam*, sinned in him, and fell with him ; that they are justly chargeable with his first Transgression ; and being his Seed and Offspring, are conceived in Sin, and brought forth in Iniquity ; That Sin has wrought a great disorder and confusion in the Powers and Operations of their Souls ; having lost the Image of God, and the Original Rectitude of their Nature, and contracted Principles and Habits that are Black and Vicious ; That they have now within them, evil hearts of Unbelief, departing from the Living God ; That the Consequence of this, is Enmity between them ; that they are God's Enemies, and He theirs ; that He is Angry with them every day, and has prepared for them an Unquenchable Fire, which they can neither Escape, nor Extinguish, by humane Art, or Created Power. And when we have thus Taught them the Terrors of the Law, with what pleasure should we teach them,

4. The *Grace* of the Gospel, and the Way of Life and Salvation by a *Redeemer*.

That when the first Covenant was broken, and became useless to all the intents of Salvation, it pleased God from the motive of Free *Grace*, without any *Provision* of Merit in Man, to Substitute a better Covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure, Established on better Promises, and founded in the Blood of his own Son.

That they have now a Great High-Priest, *Jesus*, the Son of God ; who being found in fashion as a Man, became obedient unto Death ; but is Risen and Ascended, and Passed into the Heavens, there to appear for them in the Presence of God ; That He dyed for their Sins, and Rose for their Justification, and ever lives to make Intercession for them, if *Penitent* and *Believing*. Which leads me to say,

5. That

5. That they teach them the *Conditions* of the New Covenant.

*Repentance* towards God, and *Faith* towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Shew the Necessity, and open the Nature of these Conditions ; that except they Repent, they shall everlastingly Perish ; that whoever Believeth not, the Wrath of God abideth on him : That they must have an affecting sight and sense of their Sins ; that they heartily mourn for them, not so much, because they expose their Souls to divine *Justice*, as because they are offensive to the divine *Holiness* ; that, under *this* notion, they abhor, and forsake them ; and have respect to all God's Commands : That they must yield a firm *Assent*, to what the Scripture has revealed concerning *Christ* : as *God* and *Man*, and both united ; however mysterious to proud unsanctified *Reason* ; that they esteem Him a qualified Saviour ; that they prize and love, and thankfully *Receive* Him, as their *Prophet* to instruct them, their *Priest* to save them, and their *King* to govern them : That their Faith must be justified by their Works ; and not a *Carcass* without a Spirit.

Therefore

6. We must distinctly teach them, the || *Moral Law*, and the particular Duties comprized in it.

We must shew them the finger of God ; the *Two Tables* ; the *Sacred Ten* : their Duty to God and

|| CHRIST came to fulfil, but not to destroy the *Moral Law* : The law of *Ceremonies*, which were but shadows of good things to come vanished, when the *Sun* of Righteousness arose : Nor are Christians concerned in such *judicial* Laws, as were peculiar to the *Jews*, and not founded in the Morality and Nature of the things themselves : But the *Moral Law*, in all its Branches, is still in as much force (if not more) as under *Moses* ; not to *justify* us, but to give us a perfect *Rule of Life*.

This we should teach our Children.

*Man.* That they must love the Lord their God, with all their Hearts, Mind, and Strength ; have no other gods before Him ; Represent Him by no Figure, and Worship Him by no Image ; but as a *Spirit*, in Spirit and in truth, according to the prescriptions of His own Word ; rejecting every mode of *humane* Invention and Institution : That they fear to take His dreadful Name in vain ; or to speak of Him, His Titles, and Attributes, without the most profound Reverence : That they remember the Sabbath, to keep it Holy ; not finding their own Pleasure, nor doing their own Work, on that Holy Day, but improving it to the great Ends of Religion and Devotion. Moreover, from the *Second Table*, we must teach them, to give *Honour*, to whom honour is due ; to do no *Murder*, in the act or intention : To flee youthful *Lusts*, to beware of sinning against their own Bodies, and of defiling the Temples of the Holy Ghost : That *Theft* be not found in their hands ; that they bear not false *Witness*, in any sense, against their Neighbour ; nor so much as *Covet* his Rights, Properties, and Possessions.

7. We must teach them the *Motives* that enforce the Observance of such Religious and Moral Duties.

1. The Obligations of their *Baptism*. When Children come to years of knowledge, and discretion, they must be told, what we have done for them : That they have been solemnly devoted to God and His Service ; made early Members of the Visible Church ; and laid under *federal* Obligations, to remember, and in every instance of duty, to obey their Creator. Unless we tell them this, and shew them the awful Importance of it, they can neither know it, nor take care to answer it.

2. God's *Omnipresent* and *Omniscient* Eye.

This Children have little and slight notions of : we should be the more diligent to instruct them in it. We must assure them, that God's Eye is ever upon them, and that he sees and inspects them *Day* and *Night*

Night in all their youthful Prophaneness, and dissolute Courses. Who knows the happy tendency of such Tho'ts, and how it may affect their tender Hearts?

3. We must teach them that Childhood and Youth are *Vanity*.

Put them in mind of their End, in the beginning of their Days: That the Morning of *life* may prove the Night of *Death*: That the Pleasures of Sin are but for a season: That their Youth and Vigour is no security against their Death: That when they die, there is an Eternal Period to all their carnal Pleasures; That there is a great difference betwixt the vanishing Pleasures of Sense, and the permanent Pleasures of Faith; and that the Service of *Christ* infinitely transcends that of the *Flesh* and the *Devil*.

4. We should give them, if possible, some Realizing Tho'ts of the *Eternal* World.

That their Souls *never* dye, but, young and small as they are, they must stand with the Oldest and Greatest before God, and give an impartial account for the deeds done in the Body; and that *Heaven* or *Hell*, must be their Everlasting Habitation.

Yet after all,

8. We should teach them, the in-efficacy of Moral Motives in *themselves*, and direct them to the fulness of *Divine Grace*.

Send them to *Christ*, the Head of Influence, the Fountain of Life; praying, that by His Spirit, He would alter the frame of their vitiated Natures, and work the Change, that must be wrought in their Hearts.

This for the *first* Thing; the *matter* of Instruction, or *what* we should teach our Children.

USE. 1. This Reproves the *Ignorance* of Parents, who have come to years of Discretion, and *Parentage*, and know not the Fundamentals of Religion, which they should teach their Children.

I speak it to their shame, some have not the know-  
ledge

ledge of Christ : To whom I cannot speak, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto *Babes* in Christ ; for when, for the time, they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and are become such, as have need of Milk, and not of strong Meat, being unskilful in the Word of Righteousness. If any of this sort be *present*, let them take the Reproof to themselves ; and, for the future, give a more earnest Heed to the things that are spoken, lest they again let them slip.

2. Those Parents are likewise Reproveable, who are well instructed themselves in Principles of Religion, but little care for the Improvements of their *Children*, either in knowledge or Grace.

Too many such Parents we have in this *Province*. Go to their Houses, and enquire ; and how few will you find of their Children, who know the Vital, and Essential Points of Religion here enumerated ? They can give little account of themselves, and less of God, and the Duties they owe Him. Hence they become an easy prey to every Temptation : And this owing to the *Negligence* of Parents ; that have prophane pitiless Hearts, and no bowels for the fruit of their Bodies.

But let us pass,

2. To the *Methods* of Instruction, and Enquire *how* we should teach our Children.

And this, taking the word [method] in the largest and most extensive meaning, will lead me to Answer, in a great number, and variety of Heads.

1. We must teach them *diligently*.

So Israel of old was commanded, *Deut. 6. 6, 7.* These words, which I command thee, this day, shall be in thine heart ; and thou shalt teach them *diligently* unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou  
rise

riest up. There is *diligence* imported in every part of the Charge : And this we should take for our Pattern. It is written for *our* Learning, upon whom the ends of the World are come. We must be very *diligent* in the duty, and exercise, of Instruction. Not esteem it a thing indifferent ; and only practice it, at leisurely seasons, rather for our own diversion, than their Edification ; but make a *business* of it, devote a proper portion of time to it, and attend it with diligence.

2. Our Instructions should be *frequent* and repeated.

The bare proposal of Duty *once* is not sufficient : We must inculcate the same things upon them. *Christ* did so upon his Disciples, multiplying Parables, that had the same respect, and pointed to the same end. And, what saith *Paul* ? To me, to write the same things, is not grievous, but for you it is profitable. There is nothing more *profitable* for them ; and therefore nothing should be less *grievous* to us. Their Capacities need it ; they can't have a right intelligence without it : their Apprehensions are not quick ; and their Retention is weak. Not only so ; but they have many Youthful Passions, to draw off their attention, and to tempt them from the practice of such Duties, as strike at their Pleasures. Their Hearts are like melted Wax, susceptible of *all* Impressions, but quickly *cool*, and should therefore be often warmed.

3. We should teach with *Affection*.

Parents should not think the Instruction of their Children a *Task* and Burden ; but do it with every mark of *Affection* and delight. When Mothers have nourished their Infant Children, with the natural Breast, they should, with the same readiness draw out the Spiritual, that as new born Babes, they might drink in the sincere milk of the Word, and their Souls grow thereby. They should *once more*, travail in Birth with them, 'till Christ be formed in them.

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That's the best Indulgence, and the noblest *Character* of a Parent. And indeed, the Success of Instruction, partly depends upon this : A Child will be soon observant enough of it, and think the matter of no great Consequence, where the Parents regard is so little : Nor can Parents expect their Children will be forward to *learn*, when they are so backward to *teach*.

#### 4. With *Discretion*.

Prudence is a general Qualification in all Instructors : but they especially need it, who undertake the Instruction of *Children*. In whom Prudence will teach us to consider Two things.

##### (1.) Their *Age* and *Capacity*

Children of the same Years, may differ in their natural Powers : One may be indolent, and stupid ; another quick and sociable : This the Teacher is to consider, and proportion his expectations by it. He must not expect to reap, where God has not sowed. Where the Great Author of Nature has given a *barren Genius*, we may not expect large *Improvements* upon it. Nor are we to assign every age the same part, and measure, of Instruction : A Child of *Ten* Years, must be distinguish'd from one of *Seven* ; and that from one of *five* : All, in proportion to their respective Births.

##### (2.) Their *Tempers* and Dispositions.

These are as various as their Years, and Capacities, and must be accordingly treated. Some are *stubborn* and obstinate, and must be used with Severity, and, if need require, feel the Rod. Prov. 13. 24. *He that spareth the rod, hateth his son : but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes.* Prov. 22. 15. *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a Child ; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.* This is a necessary, and wholesome piece of Severity ; yet even here, Discretion must be used, and we must not exceed : When the Child is humbled, the Rod must be withdrawn. But others discover a Temper more *soft* and generous ; and a Word to these, is more than a Rod to the  
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the other; and they rather need Encouragement, than Reproof or Correction : In this case, Parents must change their behaviour. Thus should we teach with *Discretion*, with regard to the Age, Capacity, and Temper, of our Children.

5. We should teach them by *Example*.

Go before them, in the observance of God's Statutes. They have Eyes to see, as well as Ears to hear; and are very much govern'd by the Life, and Behaviour, of their Parents. You may consume your Time, and Breath, to no purpose, in giving Precepts and Counsels, without this conformity in your *Practice*. If you teach them (for instance) the reverend use of God's Name, and prophane it in their hearing; won't they observe it, think you? and improve it? If you charge upon them the Sanctification of God's Holy Sabbaths, and remember it not your selves; will they obey you? Or, if you warn them of Intemperance, and frequent the Tavern your selves, will they pay you any regard? 'Tis a wonder if they should. And how can Parents reprove in their Children what they allow in themselves? How can they urge the observance of Duties, which they neglect? or warn against the Sins, which they commit themselves? This is the way to be judged out of their own mouths. Rom. 2. 1. *Thou art inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art, that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self; for thou that judgest, dost the same things.* Will Parents be their own Judges? and endeavour to be so, by the instruction of their Children? or have regard to their Children's Souls, when they have none for their own? it cannot be; 'tis, at least, most improbable. Remember this, Parents, and let your Lives Copy, and Repeat, the Precepts of your Lips: Be *Ensamples* to your Children, of Piety and Virtue: Let your Lights so shine before them, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father, who is in Heaven.

6. With

6. *With Patience.*

'Tis required in Teachers, that they be Patient; and particularly enjoined upon *Parents*, Eph. 6. 2. *And, ye Fathers, provoke not your Children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* The *Duty*, and *Method*, of Instruction are here united. If you would teach your Children the admonition of the Lord, provoke them not Curb your Passions: be not too hasty to discover your Resentments; wait patiently upon their weakness, and consider their Genius: for if their Passions rise, their reason and diligence, and all the ends of Instruction are lost.

7. *With Concern for the Success of Instruction.*

Some teach their Children, upon no other Motives, than Custom and decency: unconcerned for any Success. Beware of this Temper: And not only expend your time to instruct, but seek a good issue of all your Instructions. Let your Children see your Concern: This may affect their Hearts; and rouse their diligence. This too, may procure God's blessing upon your Instruction: And this is to imitate Christ, who was grieved at the hardness of Men's Hearts, and had no greater joy than to see His Children walking in Truth.

8. *In Season.*

There is a Time for all things under the Sun, and every thing is beautiful in it's Season. Children must have their *times* of Instruction; both stated and occasional: When the time is *stated*, they will be more upon their Guard, and better prepared. And, in stating the times, we should be cautious of exceeding. Time must be allowed for Recreation and innocent Diversions; to unbend the Mind, and to preserve the Health of the Body. But, besides these stated times of Instruction, there are times of *occasional* Instruction; Remarks upon particular Providences and Occurrences. Thus (to instance in one or two) when we see their *Companions* die in Youth, 'tis an excellent Season

son to teach them their *own* frailty ; the vanity of trusting in their Youth, and of deferring the great Concerns of their Souls to Old Age. When we observe their Associates, and those of the same Years, *Serious*, Grave, and of Religious dispositions, 'tis a good opportunity to Recommend Early Piety to their Choice, to shew the possibility of being old in Grace while young in years ; and the wisdom of those, who fear the Lord, from their Youth.

Once more ; When Divine Vengeance meets the Vicious, Prophane Youth, when some sudden & surprizing Providence overtakes them ; when God has Revealed His Justice in Flames of Fire, & Summoned them to His Bar, by the Voice of His Thunder, as we have often seen, and heard ; then should we especially admonish them to Remember their Creator, to Dread and Revere His Power, and not to tempt Him, as others also Tempted, and were destroyed of the Destroyer.

And, as the *Time* of Instruction should be considered, both Stated and Occasional, so should the *Place*. We must instruct our Children at *Home*, in all that is proper to that Place ; and Parents should bring them early to the Place of Worship, as soon as they are capable of any Awe and Command, and can keep silence in the Church ; they are then laid at God's Door, and brought as near the Arms of Christ, as we can carry them ; and in the way of a Blessing. But are not some of my Hearers very Guilty here ? coming themselves, but leaving their Children at Home, to mispend and prophane the Sabbath ; and this for the most *Trivial* Reasons. Our *Saviour's* Parents did better by Him, *Luk. 2. 22.* When the days of *Mary's* Purification, according to the Law of *Moses*, were accomplished, they brought Him to *Jerusalem*, to present Him to the Lord. Look upon this Pattern, and for the future, bring your Children, and inspect their Behaviour, both in the *Time*, and *Intervals* of Divine Service ; and Enquire of them at Home, what  
C they

they retain'd of the Sermon, or the Text, and its principal Heads; Would you Reform to this, I should yet hope for an Holy Seed here, a Seed to know and serve the God of their Fathers.

9. We should teach them by *Catechisms*.

I observed, in the Introduction of the Words, that the Original does more immediately intend *this* Method of Instruction; which was the principal Motive of my speaking from this Text. We must *Catechise* our Children, *constantly at Home*, and sometimes in *Publick*; and to shew the *Excellency* of this Method, I would offer the following Remarks.

( 1. ) We have the *Principles* of Religion Epitomiz'd in our Catechisms. 'Tis with such a design that Catechisms are Compiled: to Represent at one View, all the Essentials of the Christian Religion, dispersed thro' the Scriptures, which shortens and facilitates Instruction of Youth. The *whole Bible* is too large and comprehensive a System of Divinity, for the Retention of Children; they have not ripeness of judgment to search, examine, and collect points of *Faith*, from points of *Practice*. Nor can Parents, with any tolerable conveniency, do it for them. But such is the Excellency of Catechisms, that they present to our view, in a few pages, all the Rudiments and first Principles of Christianity, free from the mixtures of lesser Points, which, yet being, on some Occasions, needful, appear very numerous in the Book of God.

( 2. ) These Principles, are digested into an Excellent *Order*.

There is nothing like Method, to Aid and Assist the Memory; this puts every Link in its proper place, and where the mind takes hold of one link, by necessary Connection, it hauls over the whole Chain of Duty: Now what is more Methodical than our  
*Cate-*

*Catechism?* That † especially which is come forth under the Name and Approbation of the *Assembly of Divines*; There we have an Admirable Harmony between all the parts, each Head of Divinity being placed in its order and proper Station; so that 'tis a Collection of Divine Principles, not only *Compleat*, but *Methodical*, and consequently Excellent. But let none mistake me, and, from hence take occasion to depreciate the *Bible*, as an Immethodical Book, that must be Rectified by Humane Pens. The *Bible*, respecting the great End, and the several times of its Publication, is truly Excellent, full of Order, and in the best Method; tho' with respect to the *Particular* End of a Child's Instruction, a *Catechism*, collected from the *Bible*, is preferable to it. Or, to express my self more clearly, Those particular Parts of sacred Writing, which are adapted to the Capacity of *Children*, are better represented by themselves, than interspersed with others; for which Reason, such eminent Hands attempted the Work.

(3.) 'Tis suited in *Expression*, to the Capacity of Youth.

Here are no Scholastick Terms, as in many other Writings; but the Language easy and familiar, and Scripture-Style; where it has run too high, explained, and accommodated, to the weaker Judgment of Children; *easy*, but not *mean*.

(4.) 'Tis a Method, that will *provoke* them to learn.

An excellent Way of trying their Genius, and natural Ambition; as they are apt to affect a Preheminence in every thing, so they can't affect it too much in this. And if they have any of this *Spirit*, they will strive to excel. When they stand to be Catechised, before a *publick*, and grave Audience; they

† This will let the World see that I know how to value an excellent Piece of Christian Divinity, tho' I cannot allow that it should be imposed.

will blush to be outstript, and that will be a constant Spur to their Diligence at *Home* ; as it should likewise to their *Parents*, whose Credit and Reputation ( to say nothing of Duty ) is equally concerned.

(5.) *Experience* hath sealed, and told us, the Excellency of it.

I could mention a Place, were it proper, from my own personal Knowledge, where the very Youth excel, even some of the *Aged*, in other Parts, for their great Proficiency in the Knowledge of Christian Principles, and *this* very much owing to the Care of godly Parents, and Ministers ; who gave *Catechising* the Precedence, in their Methods of Instruction. And may we not impute, much of that Ignorance, in Matters of Faith, and that Impiety, in points of Practice, which are found among the Youth of *this* Province, to the want of this Exercise ? Nothing more certain --- *Catechising* has been neglected ; and every observant Eye sees, how fatal the Effect of such a Negligence has been, which will continue till the Cause be removed.

These five Particulars, do very much recommend to us, the Use of *Catechetical* Instruction, and supercedes the Necessity, of exhorting Parents, to the Improvement of it : You have my Tho'ts upon the Expediency of the Thing, and my proposal for the publick Practice of it. I hope, no trifling Excuses will prevail against the Use of a thing, so reasonable, excellent, and important.

But to return, we should,

10. Teach our Children *Continuedly*.

I mean, We should instruct them, not only in their Youth, but after they come to Years of Maturity ; while they continue under our immediate Care, and wing of Protection, and Influence. There is Variety enough of good Lessons to teach them ; when they have outgrown one kind of Instruction, the next, that is proper, must succeed ; 'till they be furnished with the materials of Knowledge, for a *civil*, but  
more

more especially a *religious* Life : Nor must we think them without the Line of Instruction, when gone from our Roof. We are even then concerned, to improve all Opportunities, for the Edification of our Children : The Relation we sustain to them, continues, and the Duty of it must be of the same extent. Not only so ; but, if Instruction in its Time and Place, be not continued, 'tis like to fail in its first Design : For Children, advancing in Years, and entering upon fresh Scenes of Business or Pleasure, run into new Temptations, and require something to guard against their Infection ; and what must that be, but old Institutions revived, and enforced with *new ones* ? These with God's Blessing may fortify their Vertue, awaken them to a Sense of their Duty, and give a new Life and Power to the good Principles, they had imbibed in Youth.

11. We should teach them, as having *Authority*. Men in some Relations and Capacities, have, and ought to Exercise *Authority* over others. *Magistrates* are Vested with a *Civil* Power over their Subjects ; Ministers with *Ecclesiastical* Power over their Hearers ; but in both, the Power is limited, and subordinate to the Supream Power of *God* ; whose Word, and *Law*, must always have the *first* influence upon all men's Obedience. So *Peter*, not without some heat and spirit, told the *Rulers* of the People, and the *Elders* of *Israel*, *Acts* 4. 19. Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye. Christ has taught us, to call no man *Master* upon Earth. No man, in the same superlative sense, that we call our *Maker* so : The Doctrine of Unlimited Passive Obedience is but a Chimera, and subverted by the very Text, on which they have pretended to found it, as I could easily demonstrate, were it my present Province. Such an Obedience we owe to *God*, but not to man. Nor yet are we free from the Government, and Restraint of Law, & Law-givers ; for they are the Ordinances of *God* Him-

Himself. Both *Magistrates* and *Ministers*, have a *Power* tho' of a different stamp and nature. The one over a *People*, the other over a *Church*. So have *Parents* over their *Children*: God has Conferr'd it on upon them; Nature shews the Justice, and necessity of it; and Unnatural are those Children, that in Principle, or Practice, deny it; and this Power and Authority of Parents must be Exercised in the *Instruction* of their Children. *Gen.* 18. 19. I know *Abraham*, that He will *Command* his Children, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, that the Lord may bring upon *Abraham*, that which He hath spoken of Him. And 'tis *Joshua's* Resolution; As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. He could not promise for his House, any further than the extent, and influence of his Authority. In the same Authoritative Form and Style, King *Solomon* repeats his Father's Charge, *Prov.* 4. 3. I was my Fathers Son; he taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my *Commandments*, & Live. And the Apostle puts honour and obedience, as the two Capital points of a Child's Duty, *Eph.* 6. 1. Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right: Honour thy Father & Mother: Now Obedience in the Child implies Authority in the *Parent*, and it evidently appears, that Parents have a general Authority over their Children, and that a part of that general Authority, ought to be particularly exerted, in their *Instruction*. --- But, because the just Limits of this Authority are not so clear, as I could wish, and some have stretched it beyond its Bounds, while others have let it sink too low: I shall endeavour to adjust it, and shew wherein it consists, and how far it may be exercised.

1. Neg. It is not an Authority over the *Conscience*.

Liberty of Conscience is the common Privilege of rational Beings, a Prerogative especially of *Christ's* Subjects; and, if our Children pursue the Dictates of their own Consciences, when arrived to a Capacity

city of choosing for themselves, we dare not restrain their Liberty, by any Threats or Severities whatever, even when they run into Principles, that are in our Apprehension, no way Right. --- Thus, if the Child of a precise *Dissenter*, is perswaded in his Mind, that his Parent's Opinion and Profession is not good, and shall thereupon frequent the *Established Church*, the Parent has no Power to restrain him ; and the Case is Parallel, if the Child of a rigid *Conformist* shall come over to us, upon a Perswasion of Mind, that our Mode of Worship is most agreeable to the revealed Will of God : in both Instances, the Children are at Liberty, and their Parents very Criminal, if they attempt to bind those, whom *Christ* has made free. Parents indeed may argue, and debate the Case with their Children, and if they succeed well ; if not, Conscience must still be their Guide ; for if the Authority of Parents, should reach the Consciences of Children, they must live, and act by implicit Faith, and make Ignorance the Mother of Devotion ; and as every one of us must give Account to God for himself, nothing can be more reasonable, than that we should see with our *own* Eyes, and make our own Choice.

2. Yet, there are several things, in which the Authority of Parents, may and *ought* to be exercised.

(1.) A Parent may constrain the *Diligence* of his Child.

If he be remiss and slothful, often absenting from the stated times of Instruction, or carelessly attending, and soon forgetting, such Negligence not only justifies, but requires, the Exercise of the Parents Authority, and he is culpable, if he neglect to use it : Divest a Parent of Authority *here*, and all Instruction immediately comes to an End.

(2.) A Parent may restrain his Child from any *vicious* Practice.

If he observe him addicted to any particular Sin, or associating with evil Company, spending his Time  
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and Reason at Taverns, or prophaning the Name of God, and defying his Vengeance, in Imprecations, Oaths and Blasphemies, with other Sins of the same, or lesser Aggravation, he ought to restrain him ; he might first make an Experiment upon his Reason, and use milder Counsels and Admonitions, but if these fail, he must discover his *Authority*, in some Methods of Severity ; Indulgence *here*, would be a Crime, and make him a partaker of those Sins, which his Authority might prevent or punish. Beware therefore of *Eli's* Sin : Say not, when you hear the Vices of your Children ; Why do you so ? Nay my Sons, for 'tis no good Report that I hear : Such Language is too soft. Beware how you administer spurious Reproofs unto Sons ; of resting in a *verbal*, when the Sin deserves a corporal Punishment, lest your Indulgence have the same Issue in your Children, which *Eli's* had in his, Who hearkned not to the Voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them, — An Expression full of Terror, to Parent, and Child. God will slay those Children, who refuse Submission to the just Authority of their Parents, *Prov. 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.* --- Let Children remember this, and Parents remember, that they have this Authority, and, that their Instruction requires it should be, *this Way*, exercised ; it being to little purpose to have good Principles implanted, if they be choaked with the Weeds of Vice.

(3.) A Parent may oblige his Child *under* years of Choice and Discretion, to go with him in the same Profession and Mode of Worship.

Till Children are capable of choosing for themselves, Parents are the most proper persons to do it for them, in things of a civil, and much more, of a religious Nature ; in such Circumstances, a Dissenter may compel his Son or Daughter to attend the *Meeting*

ing, and a Conformist *his* to frequent the *Church* ; Conscience is not affected, one way or the other, without some degree of *Tho't* and Reason in Children to form a Judgment, and to fix their Principles. They rather follow their own Fancy, and Whims, than any rational Dictates, more tempted by the *Pomp*, and Magnificence of the Structure, than by the *Divinity* of the Service. That is the best Church with them, where their Eyes are fed with the most dazzling Objects ; and not *that*, where the Ordinances of *Christ* are purest and most spiritual : Parents are *here* concerned to exert their Authority, and must carry their Children to that Place of Worship, which *they* apprehend to be best ; and, as they become susceptible of Instruction, give them their Reasons for it ; But, if they appear insufficient, then (as I said before) the Authority of the Parent reaches no farther : And, so you have the Limits of parental Authority fixed, see that you observe them ; oppress not the Conscience of your Children ; but constrain their Diligence ; break their Obstinacy ; keep them from vicious Company ; and, while under Years, make them join with you in your Profession.

12. We should *Pray* as well as teach.

If Prayer be not so strictly a *Part* of Instruction, 'tis surely of excellent use to *accompany*, follow, and succeed it.

(1.) 'Tis a kind of *living* Instruction.

When Death has put an End to all other parts of Instruction, Prayer yet lives in the Memory, and Esteem of God, and may be answered, when the Tongues that uttered them are silent in the Dust.

(2.) Prayer ascribes the Glory of Instruction to *God*.

We acknowledge, that all our Instructions are nothing without him, and depend upon his Blessing, and thereby place the Glory of them, where it ought to lie.

(3.) It testifies the *Regard*, which we have for the Success of Instruction.

Let a Parent pretend what he will ; let him boast of his Affection, and Care to the highest Degree ; 'tis all pretence, unless he pray for his Children : But, if we not only teach them moral and divine Lessons, but go to the Throne of Grace, and carry them to Christ, it will demonstrate that we have a just Regard for their Souls, and know, the Value, and Importance, of pious and successful Instruction.

(4.) The Children of our Prayers are usually the *best* of Children, the best in their own Choice, and Interest ; the best of Comforts to us, their Parents ; the best Helps to Religion ; and the greatest Blessing, and Ornament of civil Societies, and political Bodies.

When *Solomon* was mounting the Throne of Israel, *David* prays ; *Give unto Solomon my Son, a perfect Heart.* And he received a gracious Answer ; for *Solomon* was the most accomplish'd of Kings, and the Fame of his Wisdom spread even to *Sheba* ; and very eminent he was in his Service of the Temple.

(5.) The Object of Prayer is the *Author* of Instruction.

None can teach like him, or without him ; neither Ministers, nor Parents, neither the excellent Truths they teach, nor the good Application of them, can attain their End, without God, and especially, where the Matter of Instruction is spiritual.

(6.) God is as ready to *hear* our Prayers as we are to make them.

If the affection of a *Parent*, moves him to ask such a Blessing as this of Instruction for his Child ; He, that is the Hearer of Prayer, will grant the Petition : This we saw in the instance of *Solomon* ; and is further warranted by Christ, who has allowed us to argue the natural goodness of our *Heavenly Father*, from those propensions to Pity, and Love, which he has implanted in the Hearts of *Earthly* Parents. If we, that are Evil, know how to give good gifts to our Children ;

Children ; if we give them not stones for bread, nor a serpent when they ask a fish ; how much more shall our heavenly Father give his holy Spirit, to them that ask it ? --- Since there is none good but one, that is, God --- who has passed by, and proclaimed his Name, the Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, and abundant in Goodness.

( 7 ) Your Pious Children will put the *first Value* upon your Prayers, and Esteem it the best of all your Methods of instructing.

That Excellent Man of God, Mr. *John Flavel*, has publickly declared to the World, that he prefers the *Prayers* of a Pious Father, laid up in Heaven for him, to the richest *Inheritance* upon Earth. And if by your Prayers you can form such a Spirit in any of your Children, they will put the same value upon them ; you can't oblige them more ; nor awaken their Gratitude, nor leave a sweeter Memorial of your Parental Affection, than your constant and fervent *Prayers*.

These *Seven* Particulars speak the Excellency of instructing by Prayer ; the last of the principal and most important Heads in the Method of Instruction. Let Parents make them a *Standard*, to measure their past Conduct, and to regulate their future. Examine then, every Parent, your selves, and do it, under the sense and influence of that Day, when God shall judge the Secrets of Men. Have you indeed followed these Methods of Instruction ? Have you been *diligent* in the Duty ? have you made a *business* of it, and given attendance to it ? have you done it *frequently* ? Did you *inculcate* and press the same things ? Have you not done it with reluctancy, and esteemed it your *Burden* ? Have you taught them with love and *affection* ? Have you done it *seasonably* ; observ'd the *stated* Times of Instruction, and improv'd the *Occasional* ? Have you taught them *discretionally* ; with a just Regard to their various Tempers, Years and Capacities ? Have you taught them by *Example* ? Was there

there any good Agreement between your Conduct and Counsels? were the Precepts of your Lips Exemplified in your Lives? Do you instruct with *Patience*? and wait upon their Capacity and Genius? or do you hastily give over the Matter? Are you concerned for the *Success* of your Instructions? Do you teach them in conformity to *Custom* and Decency only, or from Diviner Principles, and more Religious Motives? Do you *wish*, wait, and expect a good issue? Have none of you neglected that Excellent Method of Instructing by *Catechisms*? Doth not your Childrens absolute ignorance, or their very small Proficiency, testify against you, that you have been negligent of their Souls, and careless of their Improvements? Are not some of your Houses, to this day destitute of *Catechisms*, while they lie by neglected, and gather Dust in others? --- Have you *continued* your Instructions? Can you say, you have embraced all Opportunities, to inform the Minds, and to influence the Practice of them that are gone from your Roof? --- Have you taught them with *Authority*, exercised to its just extent, and moving in its proper Sphere? Once more; Did God ever hear you *Praying* for your Children, for their growth in Knowledge, and Advancement in Grace and Vertue? Have you asked his Blessing, and asked as often as you ought? Search and see, what answer can Conscience draw up to these weighty Demands? Say not, they concern my Neighbour, not me: That's the Devil's Insinuation. Remember they concern you all; and I propose them to you all, without any Exception, or respect of Persons, and require your serious Tho'ts upon them, as you shall answer that God, whose Message I have now delivered and leave with you.

Having thus considered the *Matter* and *Methods* of Instruction, I pass,

3. To consider, the *Reasons* of the Duty, why we should so instruct our Children, which I shall answer under the following Heads.

1. We are under *Natural* Obligations.

If Scripture were silent, *Nature* would speak. *Birds* and *Beasts* reprove those *unnatural Parents*, that neglect the Souls of their Children, and let them die by a Famine of Instruction. The Law of Nature obliges to the Duty, Reason will tell us, without Revelation, that Parents should be the Instruments of their Childrens *Education*, as they have been of their *Birth* and *Being*. And, as natural Justice *obliges*, so the *Propensities* of Nature lead to it; --- all Creatures, almost express their Affection, in their way, to their Offspring, as is manifest from their anxious Care, and Sollicitude, to nourish and preserve them from the Insults of all foreign Invasions, ready to sacrifice their Lives, for the security of their Young. Such as these, Parents, shall be your Judges, if you neglect to cultivate the diviner Part of your Children; you at once violate the Law, and thwart the Inclinations of Nature; Can you bear such a Tho't and Reflection? Are you indeed degenerated to this? Divested of all Humanity! and your Nature sunk below the *Brutal*? Will your Passion sit quiet under this? Have you no Spark of Ambition, to kindle into Diligence? Either instruct your Children, or lay down the Name of *Parents*, a Title and Character you have no Right to: When I call you *Parents*, methinks, that Epithet carries an Argument with it.

2. We are under, not only natural, but *Scriptural* Obligations.

This Bond is sacred and inviolable, and will leave us more criminal than *Heathens*: They are unacquainted with such a Motive, they have only the Law of Nature inscribed on their Consciences, but additional to that, we have the *written* Law, in our Bibles; God's preceptive Will in his Word; there He solemnly commands you, Parents, to instruct your Children,

Children, to train them up in the Way, the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, to teach them, when you walk, and when you sit, when you lie down, and when you rise up ---- What say you to these Commands? Are they worthy your Regard, or not? Who is it that commands this, God or Man? *God* verily Himself, by the Mouth of Man; the *living* God, in whose Hand is your Life, and the Life of yours. *The One Lawgiver* and Judge, who is able to save and to destroy, and who has laid his Truth at Stake, that he will tear them to pieces that forget him? And dare you forget him? Dare you trample on those Precepts, which so often meet you in your Bibles? Are you become unnatural to your Children, and rebellious too to your God? Or, Are you those Fools, who say, there is no God? If so, Why come you here to worship him? Or think you, these are not *his* Precepts? Or that he is altogether such a One as your selves? That he is as inobservant of you, as you are of him? He that formed the Eye, shall he not see? And he that formed the Ear, shall he not hear? Doth not he that pondereth the Heart consider it; and he that keepeth thy Soul, doth not he know it? What can you plead then, to defend or extenuate your Crime?

3. You are under *Baptismal* Obligations.

If any of your Children were denyed *Baptism*, you would be apt to resent it; but do you remember, what you have engaged for them, in that Ordinance? You there renew the Covenant for your selves, and promise for your Children, That as far as your Endeavours can effect it, they shall be a holy Seed, well principled and disposed --- that as you bring them under the *Seal*, so you will teach them the *Meaning*, and press upon them the *Observance* of God's Covenant; this you do in *Baptism*, and can't recede from it, without prophaning God's Covenant, breaking your solemn Vows, renouncing your Profession, yea, and relapsing into *Heathenism*. And can you bear  
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such Reproach ? Or, can you for the future bring your Children to Baptism ? and your selves under fresh Engagements, when you have dealt falsely in God's Covenant already ? You may tremble in the presentation of your Child : -- God may justly curse the Parent, and deny a Blessing to the presented Child, because the rest are so neglected. And is a *Curse*, the Curse of *God*, so light and trivial ! Besides, you ought to remember, that this Obligation of yours is voluntary ; you take it upon your selves, and are therefore the more criminal, if you slight it : You are like that Son in the Gospel, who said, I go Sir, but went not : You seem to promise, only to complement the *Almighty*, without any Intention of performing your Vows ; you pretend a great Veneration for his Ordinance, but the *Obligations* of it are forgotten, as soon as Baptism is over. Your Children grow in Stature, more than in Wisdom ; this is an Argument to Demonstration, that your highest Motives to the Duty, are Custom and Decency : You think you must not let your Children go *unbaptised* ; therefore, you will give God the lie to his Face, and make strong the Bands of Death upon your Souls. You are willing, in a Word, that your Children should have the Name of *Christians*, while you your selves live the Life of *Heathens*. I have the longer insisted here to rectify the mistaken Notions, some have of *Baptism*, to shew its Solemnity and the special Aspect it casts upon the Instruction of its Subjects.

4. You may learn your Obligations, from the great *Value*, God and Christ have for the Souls of your Children.

God spared not his own Son ; nor did Christ think his own Life too much, to lay down for them ; they were not redeemed with corruptible Things, such as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of *Christ*. The Redemption of their Souls was precious ; the price of Blood, not the Blood of Bulls, or of Goats, but

but of *Christ*, the eternal Son of God, who has loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his *own* Blood, at this Expence, must the Soul of every Child be redeemed and saved ; and shall Parents take no Care to tell them of it ? Must *Christ* bleed and *die*, and will you not think it worth your Labour to *instruct* them ? Shall I not call upon the *Heavens*, to blush at your Ingratitude to God and *Christ* ; your Cruelty to your Children, and your blind esteem of immortal Souls !

5. You should remember, that your Children belong to *God*.

He is their original Father ; they are the Workmanship of his Hands, *Psalms* 139. 15. My Substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret ; thine Eyes did see my Substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy Book, all my Members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them. *Job* 10. 8. Thine Hands have made me, and fashioned me together, round about. Thou hast clothed me with Flesh and Skin, and fenced me with Bones and Sinews. --- Thus is the Formation of the first *Embryo*, and imperfect Body, the Work of God ; and whose are their Souls but *his*, who gives Life and Breath unto all, and whose Visitation preserves their Spirits in Life ? And if your Children thus belong to God, if his Propriety in them, be so Clear and Just, why don't you devote them to his Service, and teach them diligently what he requires of them. *Hannah* did so by her *Samuel*, For this Child I prayed ; and the Lord hath given me my Petition, therefore also, I have lent him to the Lord, as long as he liveth, he shall be lent unto the Lord. O that there were such an Heart in you ! Such a Spirit of Piety, Gratitude, and Justice ! Give God his *own* : Let all your Children be holy to the Lord.

6. You have *Christ's* Example before you.

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He taught in the Days of his Flesh, with unwearied Diligence, and raised Affection ; slipt no Opportunity ; but rather than want, would improve the most distant Hints, and *make* Occasions to instruct : Witness his Conference with the Woman of *Samaritan*, when he was seeking Rest at *Jacob's Well*. And is not this Name called upon you ? Have you no Value for the Name of *Christians* ? Do you not say that ye are *Christ's* ? See then, that you walk as he also walked ; Imitate his Zeal and Piety, Concern and Diligence : Let nothing excuse the religious Education of your Children : Christ has left you an Example, that you should follow his Steps.

And so,

7. Have many *Christians*, that have gone before you.

These things are written of them for your learning. --- Holy *David* tho' a King, tho't it no Condescension to instruct *Solomon*, nor *be* his ; witness the Book of Proverbs, where he teaches Youth the prevailing Power of Temptation ; the cursed End of Sin, and the true Excellency of those, who walk in the Paths of Vertue, --- giving the best of Rules to walk by, and the strongest Motives to influence their Practice. *Abraham* also commanded his House to keep the Way of the Lord ; and you remember, it was *Josue's* Choice and Resolution, to serve God with his House ; the same thing, that forms the Character of a devout *Cornelius* ; and thousands, since their Time, have spent much upon their Children, to make them serve the God of their Fathers. and to leave them furnished with Ability. to transmit *their* pious Institutions to the Children that should be born, and arise after them. --- What say you, Parents, to this Cloud of Witnesses, whose Lives and Characters beseech you, to commiserate the Case of your tender Offspring, and are ready to charge their Blood upon your Head ? You will call your selves Christians, as well as they ; see that you as much adorn that Name

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and Profession. From such Examples you learn, that such a Duty is practicable, and nothing unreasonable imposed upon you, and, from the Reputation, which Parents have acquired, and the Effects, that Children have discovered, you may see the Worth and Excellency of it. What can you say now? Are not your Children as dear to you, as theirs to them? Possibly you dislike the Question; the very Supposition may ruffle your Temper; but if they be, take the same Care of them, shew the same Concern for them, that the World may believe you.

8. You may read your Obligations, in the Excellency of the *Truths*, which you ought to teach them.

What Nation so great, that hath Statutes and Judgments so Righteous, as all this Law, which I set before you, this Day. --- The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul. The Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the Simple: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the Heart: The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes: The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired, than fine Gold, sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey-Comb: And in keeping of them there is great Reward. --- Where will you find any *humane* Writings, that can with such Justice, lay Claim to these Characters? Writings, that so much improves the Understanding, with the Knowledge of *Divine Objects*, and spiritual Mysteries? That make such bright Discoveries of God, in his Essence and Perfections? Or so clearly exhibit *Christ*, in the Glories of his Grace, or so plainly prescribe the Duty of *Man*, and how he should perform it? Writings, that offer such Motives to the *Will*, and that strike the *Passions* so strong, as these, where Rewards and Penalties are all infinite? Or to which of the celebrated Heathens will you turn, to find such finished Lessons of *Morality*, as you read in the *holy Scripture*, which gives the best Rules for a Civil, Social, and ( which is the glory of all Writings ) a Divine Life, --- so excellent,

lent, that *Moses* and the *Psalmist* are free from the Charge of Hyperbole, in every part of their Character. And can Parents withstand this also? Can you resist such divine Charms, and forbear to teach your Children, what carries so much of *God*, and his Image upon it? Are you so Cruel to your Children as this, to withhold from their Eyes, that Light which blessed are they that see? The divinest and clearest Light that ever arose upon them, that sat in Darkness? Can you forbear to teach them Precepts that carry a Reward in the Observance of them, and the Prospect of a future Crown in Reserve!

9. You take more pains for them in *lesser* Regards.

Your Care commences with their Birth: Your Affections centre in the *Babe*; and this commands your Care for it's life, growth, and comfort; and when come to years of Maturity, how do you labour and toil to provide for them! To raise their Repute; to dispose of them in Marriage, to the best Advantage, and to leave them in clear and good Circumstances, in a decent way of Living, after your Death! ---- This care is obvious in all, but unnatural Parents; and, if not too excessive, commendable in you: But why should your Duty be your Judge, and reprove your Conduct in higher respects? Why must their perishing Bodies, engross all your Tho'ts, and Diligence, and their *Souls* be wholly neglected? Why must Time, have all, and *Eternity* none of your Care? If for want of instruction, they go to the place of Torment, will they thank you for their Riches, Repute, and Honour? Will any of these things profit them in the day of Death, or Judgment, and Wrath? Is it not better, to beg their Crumbs here, and lie in *Abraham's* Bosom hereafter; than fare sumptuously every day on Earth, and be denied a drop of Water in *Hell*? What say you to this? Is it not a terrible tho't to Nature? How strangely inconsistent do you act? Can you pretend to the Bowels of Parents? Have you any Concern upon your Hearts for your

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Children?

Children ? Where is it ? Is this your Love, to starve, and *Murder* their Souls ? Will you provide them a Living here, and not care if they *burn* hereafter ?

10. It *Qualifies* your Children for Conversation, and makes them agreeable to all good Company.

A Man of Sense, and Morals, gains Repute and Esteem, without seeking it : His Performances, and Abilities, are applauded : His Company courted ; and his Speech such, as ministers Grace to the Hearers. These Advantages your Children lose, if you are not careful to teach them betimes : for how can they intrude themselves into a Society, unprovided with materials of knowledge and discourse ? A Society, that takes no Notice of them, because they reap no Benefit from them ? And what's the consequence of this ? If a good Society reject me, I must go to another ; associate with those, that have no Vertue or Knowledge, to place them above me ; those, with whom I may stand, and converse, upon a parr, without shame or fear : There's the Consequence. If your Children run into Company, that is pernicious to them, and displeasing to you, the fault perhaps is nearer home, than you are willing to think. 'Tis because they were not sooner fitted for better : And is not this to your shame ? If you had lost all sense of Religion, and Piety, and the Eternal World, yet, methinks your Ambition should need no motive to qualify your Children for *this* ; to make them look, and live, and speak, like other People.

11. It will make your Children an *Honour* and Comfort to you.

Prov. 10. 1. *A wise Son maketh a glad Father, but a foolish Son is the Heaviness of his Mother.* To have Children furnished with Wisdom, is a Mark of God's Favour, and a Gift from the Father of Lights : 'Tis often honoured among Men, and considered as the Fruit of their Parents Care and Diligence ; and for Comfort, what greater Joy can you have, than to see your Children walk in the Truth ! --- What considerate Parent can refrain from Tears, to see any that  
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are under his immediate Care, and that stand in the Relation of *Sons*, deviating from the Paths of Vertue, Morality, and Religion, in Pursuit of their own Destruction; especially, if this happens thro' his own criminal Neglect, when, if taken in Time, their Hearts and Lives might have been better form'd, and their Heads better furnish'd: And an equal Pleasure must the Review afford him, if he has discharg'd the *Parent's* Duty, with Success, when his Children receive his Institutions, with Delight, and have improved them to Advantage. And now let me ask, if this be not an Argument to educate your Children? If you have no Regard for them, yet have Regard for your selves. Consult your own Credit, Reputation and Comfort.

12. Children well instructed, are the Hopes of *future* Times, both in a civil and religious Regard.

1. In a *civil* Regard.

Governments are never more happy, than where the Fountains of Knowledge stand open; and when they can fill the Posts of Honour with Sons of their *own* Principles & Education: For want of this, Strangers often come in upon them, & overmatch them, with Arts of Deceit and Flattery; which should be a Spur to every Parent, to give his Children the best Education he can, and to lay a Foundation for a constant Succession of accomplish'd Persons in the *State*. This is to consult the *Publick*, in the best Sense, and to approve himself a *Friend* and *Father* of his Country.

2. The Instruction of Youth is of the same Consequence in a *religious* Regard.

Our *Churches*, under Christ, are built on this Rock, viz. A Number of religious Youth, well instructed, and trained: These are our Hopes, our Eyes are fix'd upon them; great therefore is the Consequence of their Instruction.

The *Aged*, zealous and pious as they are, cannot serve always: The Graves are ready for them: And what Destruction will their Death presage, to the Church

Church of God, unless the *Youth* inherit their Grace, and Spirit, as they Rise, and stand in their Room ! 'Tis such a succession, under God, that has preserved Religion in all Ages. What had become of the School of the Prophets when their Master was taken from their Head, had not *Elisha* taken his Mantle, and with it, a double Portion of his Spirit ? Or how had Israel entered into Canaan, if *Joshua* had not led them, when *Moses* was Dead ? The same Method must still be observed ; if our aged pious Fathers leave us, we must fix our Eyes upon our young *Elisha's*. Here is *this* Church in particular, that stands upon this Bottom ; our Aged are few, but our rising Posterity is numerous, and promise an unspeakable Blessing, if trained up, in the Way they should go : Let all Parents, who pretend any Concern for *Religion*, in general, and for *this Church*, in particular, be zealous and diligent, to form the same Spirit in all their Children. Some of you ( I speak it to your Honour ) have express'd your Zeal, for the Support of *Christ's* Interest among us, even beyond your Ability ; but let me tell you, that all your pious Wishes, and Labour, is lost, if this one important Thing, the Instruction of your Children, be omitted. And can you digest this ? Can you think with Patience of a Time, when this Pulpit shall be silent ? And the Sabbath silent ? And your Children without the Bread of Life ? Vicious and prophane ? Living as without God in the World, Aliens to the Common-Wealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise ? What a moving Tho't is it to a *Parental*, and much more so to a *Christian* Spirit : Especially, seeing,

13. The *Glory of God* is concerned in it.

This is a direct Consequence from the former Head ; the Interest of the Church, and the Glory of God, being closely connected : for God can be glorified, in no other, than a *declarative* sense, by the acts of Devotion, that are proper to Religion, and spiritually performed in his Churches. Now, the end, and excellency  
of

of our rational Powers, is to glorify God : This should be our study, aim, and endeavour ; and Wisdom will dictate the best Methods to attain it : But where is our duty as to the *End*, or our wisdom in the choice of *Means*, if we neglect to instruct our Children? to improve their Parts, and to sanctify their Improvements? If this be wanting, God will go without the glory of his Grace, objectively on them, and actively from them.

14. Their *Salvation* is concerned in it.

'Tis at the expence of their *Souls*, not to instruct them: 'Tis to kill the better Part, with the worst of famine. Their Souls starve, if they cannot drink in the sincere Milk of the Word. Some degree of knowledge in the Principles of Faith, is fundamental to their happiness ; for there is no other Name given under Heaven, among Men, by which they can be saved, but the Name of *Jesus* : And how shall they believe on Him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a Teacher? Supposing them masters of their Mother-tongue, in the reading part, your assistance may be necessary to instruct them in what they read ; for how can they understand the great Truths of the Gospel, except some one teach them? Or, if sufficiently versed in the Doctrine of Christ, your Counsels have a natural tendency, to make them observe his Precepts, and imitate his Life ; a thing indispensably necessary, to secure their Salvation. What a persuasive is this ! If this will not prevail, what will? What can Parents more regard than their own *Children*? the Fruit of their Bodies? their natural Blessings and Desires? And what more in Children than their *Souls*? the better and immortal Part? so much esteemed by God Himself? so highly valued by Christ? What say you, Parents? Can you bear the dismal tho't, of bringing up Children for Hell and eternal Fire? Are you content, that the Child of your Love, and Embraces, should be squeez'd

squeez'd in Satan's Clutches, and tormented with unquenchable Flame ? If not, instruct them.

15. The time of Instruction is very *short* and uncertain.

God only knows, how much Time, and how many Opportunities, you will have to instruct your Children. Of as great Importance as it is, a Year, a Month, or even a *Day*, might put it out of your power ; put them beyond the reach of all your Counsels and Instructions, and leave you an *Eternity*, to Repent your negligence. This, methinks, should not only awaken you, to Instruct, but to do it, with a double Diligence. Nor is that the only Argument, which arises from it : For, if the Time of Instruction be short, the Labour of it can't be long. What is it to spend a few hours of the Day upon them, when few are the days of the years of their Pilgrimage ? when you must soon rest from the Labour, and take the Reward ? If you refuse your Children *this*, what will you bestow upon them ? Where is the strength and evidence of Parental love ?

16. It ought to be a great Argument with you, to consider that you must give an *Account* for your Childrens Souls.

God has committed them to your Charge, and will require them at your Hands. If you have discharged your trust, and *they* have been defective, you have delivered your own Souls, and their Blood returns upon your own Head : If they have answered the End of your Care and Instruction, no Heart is able to conceive, the Satisfaction it will afford you, at the Day of Judgment ; when a Parent can say ; Lord, Here am I, and the Children, thou hast given me ; Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and none of them is lost. I have taught them thy Fear, and they have kept thy Word. What a Joy & Crown of Rejoycing, must such Children be in the Day of the Lord ! How ready to rise up, and bless the Memory of their Parents, and all their pious Care ! And to

to bless their *Heavenly Father*, who gave them such Fathers of their Flesh ! while Thousands perished for want of the Blessing ! But turn the Scales, and represent to your minds, the case of a negligent Parent, when Inquisition is made for Blood, and, like *Abel's* against *Cain*, the blood of his Children shall cry against him. When Children who stand among the Goats, at Christ's left Hand, shall thus accost and accuse their Parents : You have been Cruel and Unmerciful to our Souls : By your Negligence it is, that we now stand at the *Left Hand*, and must depart from *Christ*, to take our Portion with *Devils*; too much like your selves. Had you acted the part of *Parents* ; had you imitated the excellent Patterns of other religious Parents, to their Children, we might probably have been in their Circumstances : But your Care for us, respected the present Time, and terminated in the things of the World. You were solicitous enough, what we should eat, what we should drink, and wherewithal we should be cloathed : You would provide us Wealth, and Esteem, teach us the Art of Behaviour ; and how to lay up for our selves Treasures upon Earth : That was the *top* of your Ambition ; and you looked no further : Your Duty was disregarded ; you took no care to furnish our Minds with Knowledge, nor our Hearts with Grace ; to guard our Vertue, to preserve our Morals, and to sanctify our Souls. You plainly saw us addicted to Vice, and connived at our Faults ; and that Indulgence has ruined us for ever. Had you exercised your Diligence to instruct us, and exerted your Authority to correct and restrain us, how happy had it been for us : But we could hear nothing of this from you ; nor could we reap any advantage from your Lives : There was nothing *imitable* in them, much less *attractive*. You are verily Guilty concerning Us, your Children, in that you saw the Anguish that was coming upon us, and the Terrors of the Day that has now overtaken us, and would not premonish us. And

now our Blood be upon you ; we Curse the Day of our Birth, and wish your Negligence repaid.

Behold, Parents, the dreadful Images, see the cursed Fruits of Negligence ! and beware this be not *your* Case. How will you stand before the Son of Man ? or see the faces of your Children ? and hear their passionate Accusations ? when the prospect of that Hell to which you have brought them, shall set their Souls on Fire ?

17. You know *your selves* the Price of Instruction.

Your own Experience tells you, 'tis valuable : If any of you want it, *that* methinks might tell you the wants of your Children ; and move you to prevent such Complaints in them, as we hear from you. And you that are well instructed *your selves*, are the Persons to recommend it to others : And can you hide from your Children what is so precious to *your selves* ? I would hope better things of you.

18. *Your* Parents have instructed you.

Some of you have had Parents, of eminent *Piety*, and good Christian knowledge ; and this has moved them, to endeavour your Instruction. They knew its Importance, and very great Consequence ; and therefore as became them, laboured to transmit their Knowledge, and Spirit, to Posterity : And shall it descend no lower ? Must it expire and die with you ? Care you not as much for *your* Children, as they did for *their's* ? 'Tis a sign how little you inherit of their Souls ; and they, as well as your Children, will rise in Judgment against you, and condemn you, because you have the same Ability to teach, which they had, and their Examples offer you the strongest Motives to use that Ability. They will tell you at last, we dealt not so by *you*, as you have done by *yours* : You have lost our Zeal and Care.

19. 'Tis the design of their Nature and *Capacity*.

Why has God given you Children that are *Rational*, and intelligent, and capable of Learning, but that you should improve their Genius, and cultivate  
their

their Parts and Capacities ? Were your Children *Idots*, you might be excused ; but if you forget those who have reasonable Powers, and the free exercise of Reason, you are inexcusable, O Parents, whoever you are.

20. Children are very *susceptive* of Instruction.

If you teach them young, you may teach them easily ; their Minds are soft and tender : The Prejudice they conceive is yet but small : The Root of Vice in Children, are like tender Plants, more easily plucked up ; and their Hearts more apt to receive the Impressions of Virtue.

Thus have I offered a *Score* of Reasons, why Parents should instruct their Children. They are obliged to the Duty from *Nature*, *Scripture* and *Baptism* ; they know the Esteem which God, and Christ, have put upon their Children ; their Children *belong* to God by the Right of Creation, Redemption, and Providence ; they have Christ himself and his *Saints* for their Pattern : The Matter of Instruction is the most *excellent* ; they take more Pains for them in *lesser* Regards : It *qualifies* their Children for good Conversation, and leaves them less exposed to the Temptations of bad : Such Children are an *Honour*, and Comfort, to their Parents ; and the Hopes of *future* Times, both in a *civil* and *religious* Regard ; the Prosperity of their Country, is, in a great Measure, built upon them, and the Church of God looks to them for Support : The Time of Instruction is *short*, Parents are *accountable* to God for their Children ; they know *themselves* the Want and Excellency of Instruction ; they were *instructed* by their Parents ; Instruction is the Design of their *rational* Natures : and they are very *susceptive* of it.

The last Reason, and the only one express'd in the *Text*, shall be given you in the second Observation : viz.

Obs. 2. That, if we train up a Child, in the Way he should go, he will not depart from it, when he is old.

But here we may properly inquire, the *Sense* and Extent of this Truth. For,

1. Neg. In an *absolute* Sense, it is not true. Some reprobate Youth make an awful Exception to the wise Man's Remark; too many that have sprung from Parents, of the most religious Principles, and strictest Morals: Parents that have bore a just Sense of their Charge, and have taught their Children, with the fondest Care and Constancy, by their Lives as well as Lips, by their Prayers, as well as Counsels; have degenerated as they advanced in Years, into *profligate, licentious and prophane*; lost the Impression of their first good Principles, and run into all Intemperance; so that it has happened unto them according to the old Proverb, *2 Pet. 2. 22. The Dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the Sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the Mire.* And of young Saints, they have become old Devils: Nor need we so much wonder at it, when we consider, that the Power of natural Corruption is strong, the Temptations of the World many, the Devices of Satan deep, and the Influence of evil Company great, and God Sovereign, to bestow or withhold his Grace, as seemeth him good.

2. Posi. Tho' *all* Youth retain not their good Impressions to Age, yet,

(1.) 'Tis the *natural* Tendency of the thing.

'Tis the Tendency, as well as Design of early Instruction, to fix and perpetuate both Knowledge and Grace. When Children have the Path of Duty marked out before them, when their Copy is wrote in legible Characters, and they are presented with the warmest Motives, what is more like to attain the End? How reasonable is it to expect that they should grow in Wisdom and Favour with God, as they grow in Stature, and bear Fruit even in old Age.

(2.) As it has a natural, so a *moral* Tendency.

'Tis the best Expedient to fetch down, and secure the Blessing of God: For if Parents are zealous to pro-

promote in their Children, a governing Influence of their Duty, and solicit God for his Blessing, doubtless they shall have it. God indeed is Sovereign, and may without the Charge of Injustice deny it; but 'tis rare he does so; 'tis a meer Act and Proof of his Sovereignty; not conformable to the Course of his Administrations either in *Providence* or *Grace*; not at all consonant to the Revelations of his natural Goodness, who is more ready to give his Spirit to his humble Suppliants, than earthly Parents to give their Children Bread. So that 'tis the Tendency of Instruction both Natural and Moral. And,

(3.) *Experience* has confirm'd the Truth in many comfortable Instances.

Thanks be to God, we see the pious, zealous, and religious Spirits of departed Saints, revive and shine in many of their *Children*. We see in *Timothy*, the unfeigned Faith which dwelt first in his *Grand-mother Lois*, and in his *Mother Eunice*; and 'tis happy for us, that we are thus perswaded of many. And this, Parents, tho' mentioned the last, as Method required, is an Argument of the *first* Strength, why you should instruct your Children: Say not I have urged you to a Thing, established upon no Reasons, when, besides *twenty* more, you have *this* in the Text. I have now finished the doctrinal Part of the Subject, and hasten to some Improvement and Reflection.

Inf. 1. Are the Obligations of Parents, to instruct their Children, such as we have heard, so Numerous and Strong? This infers an Obligation upon *Ministers*, to put them in Mind of it, and to excite them to it.

Can we see you so remiss and Negligent? Can we revolve your Obligations? Can we consider the infinite Importance of the Thing, with Respect to God, your selves, and your Children, and must we be silent, and negligent too? Neglect *our* Duty because you neglect *yours*? No, no; Our Character and Relation won't suffer us to hold our Peace: We shall be Speechless at Judgment, if so now; for we watch for

for yours, and your Children's Souls, as they that must give an Account. And will you resent our Freedom, when we awake you, at the Brink of Hell, and warn you to flee from the Wrath to come? Is not such Treatment the worst of Ingratitude, for our Love and Care of you? But if you will thus requite us, we must discharge our Trust, and commit our selves to him that judgeth righteously. For my own Part, I must freely tell you, the small Time I have stood upon the Tower, I have seen many of you too little concerned in this Matter of Consequence: Your Children growing up in Ignorance and Vice, as if they had no Sense of a God, or a future State: And 'tis Time to set the Trumpet to my Mouth, to shew you your Transgressions, and sinful Omissions: This has led me to the Choice of the Subject: And for this I have indulg'd my self in a greater Freedom, Closeness and Pungency of Expression, as you have doubtless observ'd, in the Close of each Argument; and need I an *Apology* for it? No; but rather, that I have done it no better: that I have come so short of the Weight and Importance of the Subject. I can do no more; I have discharged my Conscience: The Blood of your Children be upon your own Heads, if you still neglect them.

Inf. 2. This should affect our Endeavours, to promote the *Means* of Education among us.

It calls very loudly upon us to erect and encourage *Schools* in the Province, and if ever the Times will bear it *Colleges* to. *Carolina* needs such Helps, as much as any Place, and if we would observe, what extensive Blessings, *Seminaries* of Learning prove to others, for their own and the Supply of their Neighbours, we should be more fond of promoting them. *Strangers* have express'd their Regard for us in this Way, more than we for our selves. And however low the Thing may seem to run in our Esteem, 'tis certainly in *it self*, very useful and excellent, and all Attempts to countenance and promote it, laudable and worthy.

Inf. 3. My Doctrine speaks to them that have the Charge of *Schools*.

He that desires the Office of a *Schoolmaster*, desires a good Work : But let him be Blameless in the discharge of his Duty. Let him consult *Conscience*, more than Interest ; 'tis a great Charge, and a solemn Work, and of great Consequence : The Obligations that lie upon Parents, are then transferr'd to Masters, and they must answer for the Children that are under their Care.

Inf. 4. It likewise speaks to *Children* themselves.

You see, Children, what Obligations your Parents are under to instruct you ; your Obligations are as great to *receive* Instruction : 'Tis expected of you, that you be submissive to their Authority ; that you obey their Voice ; that you attend the stated Times of Instruction, and be intent upon your Books ; that you remember and practice their instructive Admonitions, and not mock and deride them as some Children do, that are ripe for Destruction, & within a step of *Death*, and *Hell* ; nor absent from your proper Business : For, shall your Parents do *all*, and you nothing ? No ; It behoves you, by your Diligence, to facilitate your Instruction, and to make that their Pleasure ; which is else their Labour. A Gratitude to your Parents demands this from you ; 'tis the least you can do, in Return to their Kindness, & in Answer to the heavy Charge of your Souls, which lieth upon them ; and if you refuse this, you are *ungrateful* Children, and must expect a Vengeance equal to your Crime. All your Parents Endeavours will at last complain and cry against you : Or if you wanted Gratitude at least, methinks, the *Importance* of your Instruction might affect you : What ! is it a light Thing with you, whether you be instructed or not ? Doth God insist so much upon Trifles ? Is that suitable to his Nature ? Is not Instruction of great Importance ? And are you not as deeply concerned in it, as your Parents ? And remember, if you have Parents that instruct you, 'tis more than all Children have ; and if more be given you, remember that more will be required of you.

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Inf. 5. Are Children apt to retain the Institutions of Youth, to Old Age, this may minister some *Comfort* to Religious Parents, when they are leaving the World.

Most Parents, in their Sick and *Dying* Hours, are Sollicitous for their Children. The *Worldling* is afraid of their Poverty, that they will fall into Straits, and be reduced to Wants. But the *Christian* Parent has a Sollicitude, higher and better Principled : He has known Himself, the power of Temptation, and is therefore afraid for his Children, lest they be overcome by the World, and he has bestowed labour upon them in vain. And what Comfort must this Doctrine yield, in the multitude of his Thoughts within him ! He has patiently instructed his Children, and has good grounds to hope, they will always retain the influence, and impression of it. And can any Pleasure equal this ! To be entering into Rest our selves, and to die with the sweet assurance, that our Children will follow us, thro' Faith & Patience to inherit the Promises !

Inf. 6. What must we judge of Parents, when their Children grow up in Vice.

We cannot indeed, positively, determine, that the fault is *theirs* : But, if my Doctrine be so generally true, 'tis a sad sign, they have been negligent, and never spent a serious Thot upon their Children. How else came they to appear so vain and vicious ? Verily we may often guess at the Parent, from the Manners of his Children.

Inf. 7. How doubly Guilty are those Children, who have had the Priviledge of a pious Education, but *degenerate* from it, as they grow up !

They baulk the Expectations (if I may so speak it) of God and Man : They thwart the *natural & moral* Tendency of Early Instruction, & seem to have Souls of a different form & nature from others. And this Inference I wish we... applied to the Youth of *This* Congregation, who have, some of them, forgot both their *Fathers*, and the God of their Fathers.

Inf. 8. We have reason to lament the Premature and Early Death of *Pious* Youth.

I say, to Lament it, for who knows, what Blessings are buried with them.. Those that set out Early, and with such hopeful Beginnings, promised in their Generation, to be eminent Instruments in the Service of God : Bright Ornaments of Religion, and a Pillar of Support to the Churches of Christ : But Death kills our hopes with a Stroke, and only leave their *Memory* to excite our Grief.

F I N I S.