

SERMONS

by Cotton Mather

A collection of sermons by the famous Puritan preacher Cotton Mather, including instructions on family duties and the responsibilities of children toward their parents as part of Christian obedience and social order.

8 Chapters

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01 - What Must I Do To Be Saved?

What Must I Do To Be Saved? The Greatest Concern in the World

[The jailer] "brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:30-31) What Must I Do to Be Saved?

It is impossible to ask a more weighty Question! It is deplorable that we hear it asked with no more Frequency, with nor more Agony. The Spirit of Slumber which the Poison of the old Serpent has brought upon the children of Men is to be deplored exceedingly. Awaken us out of this [terrible] stupidity, O God of all Grace, lest we perish [eternally]. My Design is to bring in a Good and full Answer to this Weighty Question, Oh! how Thankful ought we to be, for the Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God, that makes us able to Answer it! The Gospel which we have in our hands, this a Gospel of such astonishing Mystery, of such Heavenly Majesty, and of such Consummate Purity, that it can be no other than the Word of God; It must be of a Divine Original. Oh! highly Favoured People, who know this Joyful Sound! Oh! Unavoidably and Inexcusably Wretched, if we disregard it. The Devils knew, That those Excellent Ministers of the Lord Paul and Silas, were come to Philippi, with a design to answer this Weighty Question. They could not bear it; they feared it would issue in a Destruction upon their Kingdom there. They stirred up the minds of some Wicked People, to abuse and Revile these Ministers, and run them into Prison. Some Wicked People were afraid lest they should lose a little Money, by the coming of such Ministers among them; and the Devils inspired these Muckworms to use incessant Endeavours until they had made these Ministers incapable of Preaching any more unto them. Our Glorious Lord appeared for his Faithful Servants. They Glorified Him in the midst of their Trials. They Sang His Praises under the Stripes and the Stocks which the Satanic Party inflicted on them. Oh, Patient Servants of the Lord! What a symptom have you that you shall one Day Reign in Glory with Him? These poor men Sang unto the Lord; the Lord heard them, and sav'd them! A terrible Earthquake at Midnight shook open the Doors of their Prison. The Keeper that had the now superseded keys of the Prison, was terrified. In his consternation, he falls down at the feet of his Prisoners, he treats them no longer as Prisoners, but rather as Angels. He fervently puts to them the Question, which, Oh! That it were often heard with an equal fervency among us! What must I do to be Saved?

Some Learned men think that the Gaoler had from the Traditions of their Philosophers, conceived some Hope of a better Life; and seeing his Life here in danger, he does, as distressed Wretches in the Last minutes of their Life use to do, Cry out for some help to make sure of a Better Life, Or, more probably, the late words of the possessed Young Woman in the Town about these Ministers; These men are the Servants of the most High God, who show unto us the way of Salvation; might run in his mind, and mind him of that Salvation, and make him think, whether these men were not appointed of God, for the Instruction of others in the way to that Salvation.

There is a most important matter which must now be undertaken to be demonstrated. That whereas there must be something done, by every man that would be saved, it should be the

Sollicitious Inquiry of every man What must be done by him, that he may be Saved.

We will proceed upon the awakening Demonstrations of this thing; Demonstrations more powerful than any Thunderbolts. Oh! that the issue might be, that the Hearers may be Awakened, with a mighty Impression upon their Souls to make the Enquiry What must I do to be Saved?

I. You must know, that There is a Great Salvation proposed unto the sinful Children of men; And you must Know, and Think, That there is Nothing of So Great Concernment for any man, as to obtain a part in that Great Salvation.

Indeed Knowledge is the first Thing, that is necessary in order to Salvation; And it is absolutely necessary, Unspeakable Necessary. [Proverbs 1:1-33] We read Hosea 4:6. of People Destroyed for the lack of Knowledge.

Ah! destructive Ignorance, what shall be done to chase thee out of the World! A world which by thee is rendered a dark World, the Kingdom of Darkness! The Oracles of Wisdom have assured us The Soul without knowledge is not good; They assured us,

They who know not God shall have a Vengeance in flaming Fire, taken of them; They have assured us; 'Tis Life Eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. An Ignorance of the [true] Gospel, is attended with a long Train of Unknown, but very Evil Consequences. 'Tis the Gospel of Salvation; They that are Ignorant of it must needs miss of Salvation.

'Tis an Erroneous and Pernicious Principle, That a Man may be Saved in any Religion, if he do but Live according to it. The unerring and infallible Gospel has expressly taught us otherwise [in] 2 Corinthians 4:3 "If our gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that be lost."

It is not unseasonable here, and as Early as may be, to bring in that Admonition.

Knowledge, Knowledge; To get good Knowledge, let that be the First Care of them that would be Saved. Knowledge, 'Tis a Principal thing; My Child, Get Knowledge; with all thy might, Get understanding. Oh! That this Resolution might immediately be made in the minds of all our people; I will get as much Knowledge as ever I can! The Word of God must be Read and Heard with Diligence that so you may arrive to the Knowledge that is needful for you. The Catechisms in which you have the Word of God fitted for your more early Apprehension of it must be diligently Studied.

Unto all the other Means of Knowledge, there must be added, Humble and Earnest Supplications before the Glorious Lord, You must cry to God for Knowledge, and lift up your Voice to Him for Understanding; Prefer it before Silver, Before any Earthy Treasures.

There may be some so very Ignorant, that they know not how to Pray. I would advise them to take the Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm. They will find in it many a Prayer suited unto their circumstances, Take it, Use it, and particularly those Petitions in it: Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes; and Lord, Teach me Good Judgment and Knowledge; and Lord, Give me Understanding, that I may know thy Testimonies: Give me understanding and I shall Live. Take Encouragement from that word; and Plead it before the Lord: James 1:5. If any of you lack of Wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men Liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be

given him. And now to pursue diverse Ends at once, I am to tell you That the Main Things which 'tis necessary for you to know, are the things which concern Salvation. More Particularly;

You must know, first; From What you do need Salvation. And here, First; You are to know, That the One Eternal and Infinite God who Subsisteth in Three Persons which His Word call, The Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit Created our First Parents, in an Holy and Happy State, at the End of the Six Days, in which He Created all things.

But, our First Parents hearkening to the Temptations of Wicked Spirits, did Eat a Forbidden Fruit; and by that sin, they fell from God, and from their Holy and Happy State; And their Fall has bro't their Children with them, into a State of Sin and Misery, their Sin was our Sin, from their corrupt nature we are born into the world envenom'd with such a Nature [heart]. The Death [eternal] which the Broken Law of God threatened unto them; is due to us all: A Death which intends all Misery, not only in this World, but in Another, where our Souls continue Immortal [live forever], after they have left this world.

Then you are to know; That there is a Law given to us, which, is the Everlasting Rule, according to which God requires us to glorify Him; a Law of Love to God and Man, contained in our Ten Commandments.

But, that you daily break this Law; and that every Breach of it Incurs the Wrath of God who is of Purer Eyes than to behold Evil and cannot look upon Iniquity.

Lastly, you are to know, That while you lie under the Guilt of Sin, you are also under the Reign of Sin, and under the Reign of Satan too; A most woeful Oppression from the Worst Enemies That Can Be. God is in Ill Terms with you. He visits you not with His great consolations All Things are against you; The things that appear for your Welfare, do but Ensnare you, do but Poison you, do but produce your further Distance from God. Your very prosperity hurts you; Your Adversary lays the Chains of Death upon you. You are every moment in danger, of being seized by the formidable Justice of God for Eternal Burnings. If you Die Unpardoned, you are sent among Devils. Damn'd unto torments; must undergo a strange Punishment, and a long one which is Reserved in a Future State, for the workers of iniquity [unrepentant sinners].

Oh! Sinner; this, is thy Lamentable Case And Knowing this how canst thou do any other than make that Sollicitious Enquiry; What must I do to be Saved? Knowing this Terror of the Lord. Oh! Be Perswaded!

You must know secondly by Whom you may have Salvation. And here; You are to know the great mystery of godliness God manifests in flesh. Your Salvation depends on your knowing of such a Saviour.

We have not the least Intimation in the Book of God, That a unknown Saviour will be ours. But it is dreadfully intimated, That if People have no Understanding of Him, He that made them will not have mercy on them and He that formed them will shew them no Favour.

You are then to know; That the Son of God assumed the Blessed Jesus, the Sinless and Holy Son of a Virgin, into one person with Himself. And this Admirable Person, who is God and Man in one Person, has as our Surety, fulfilled the Law of God for us; answered the precept of it, in his Righteous Life; answered the Penalty of it, in His grievous death; suffered the Cross, and Endured

the Curse in our stead.

You are to know herewithal; that this mighty and matchless and Only Saviour of the world, who is also the Governor of the World, is Risen from the Dead, and is Enthroned in the Heavens, and will return to rule and Judge the World; but He will Save unto the uttermost All that come unto God by Him.

Oh! Undone Sinner; canst thou hear of such a Saviour and not make that Sollicitious enquiry, What must I do, that I may have an Interest in the Only Saviour?

You must Know, Thirdly; What shall be done for you if you find Salvation. And here; You are to know that no good thing shall be withheld from the Saved of the Lord. Wonder wonder. Be swallowed up with wonderment, at this Grace, O self destroyed ones!

There is Proposed unto You A deliverance from all the undesirable Circumstances, into which you have Run, by your Departure from God.

It is proposed unto you, That you shall No longer be the children of Death, but be made the Children of God. That you shall be Forgiven and Accepted with a Reconciled God and be followed with perpetual Testimonies of his Fatherly Love: That No Iniquity shall have Dominion over you, but you shall become the amiable Temples, wherein He will dwell, with the sweet Influences of His Good Spirit forever irradiating of you.

It is propos'd unto you; That your Spirits, at your Dissolution [death] shall put on the Garments of Light, and Enter into the Peace a Rest of an Heavenly Paradise: That your Bodies ere long by a Resurrection shall be Restored unto your Spirits: but be the Lively, the Lovely, the most Agreeable and Everlasting Mansions for them: That you shall have a Joyful Portion in the city of God, and have His marvelous kindness Forever doing unutterable things for you, in that strong city: There you shall at length be filled with all the Fulness of God and have God become All in All unto you for ever and ever.

All this is contained in the Salvation whereof You have a Tender. Salvation, 'Tis a comprehensive Word as Incomprehensible Good! Eye has not seen, Ear has not heard, no Heart can conceive, what is laid up in the Salvation of God.

Oh! Ruin'd Sinner; why does it not now become thy Sollicitous Enquiry; What must I do that I may not lose the vast things whereunto I am invited by my Saviour?

These are the things that must be known. And if these Things Be known, and Own'd, the plain Inference from them will be this; That the Man is forsaken of Reason, Unworthy to be called a Reasonable Man, who is not very solicitously Inquisitive; What must I do to be saved? But now, 'tis time to answer that great Enquiry, we will do it by calling in a Second Proposition.

II. Something must be done by every man that would not forfeit all claim, Reject all Hope of the Great Salvation. And this also must be known. You must Know What must be done. And thereupon it shall be said unto you; Job 13:17. "When you know these things happy are you If you do them." It is Not Enough to Know; There must be Practice Joyn'd With your knowledge.

Something must be done; Else it had never been said, Hebrews 5:6 "Christ is the Author of eternal Salvation, unto all them that Obey him", Something must be done; Else we had never been told; Hebrews 6:9 "There are the things that accompany Salvation."

We are often instructed in the Sacred Writings, That there Is a Way, wherein alone Salvation is to be Expected, A way called The way of Life; and, The way of truth; The way of the Lord; and the way of Peace; and The way of Good men; and, The way of the Righteous. In this way, Something must be done, There are Steps to be taken that we may Fnd this way, and Keep this way. Tis the Everlasting way; There is no Altering of it.

Something must be done; For we are sure, All men are not saved. There are some, who are Children of Perdition, There are some, who are Vessels of wrath; there are some who go away into everlasting punishment, Something must be done, to distinguish you from that crooked Generation. We read, Matthew 7:14 "Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and Few there be that Find it".

Indeed there is Nothing to be done by us, to merit our Salvation, But something must be done to secure our Salvation.

Indeed there is Nothing to be done by us, in our own strength. But something Must be done by us, thro' Christ who strengthens us.

More plainly, Our Blessedness now come not unto us, on the Terms of a Covenant of works, 'Tis not properly our doings, that is the condition of our Blessedness. We are to be Saved, by Taking rather than by Doing. The condition is receive and be saved. It is, approve, and be Saved. Or, Be willing to be Saved. We speak of Doing, in the Largest sense of the word; and we still say, something must be done, that we may be Saved.

Let the Question then come in. And, Oh! Bring it in with all the Solitude, which were proper for, the Greatest Concern in the World.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

I have seen this Question Scandalously answered, in Pamphlets that have been dispersed about our Nation. The One Thing that is needful has been left unregarded, unmention'd. Perhaps the Observation of certain Superstitious Holidays has been recommended instead of that one thing. Alas how have the souls of men been betrayed, by men unskilful in the word of righteousness! How unskilfully, and unfaithfully have the methods of Salvation been declared by many who pervert the Gospel of Christ! Not so now I hope! A pure gospel, a sound doctrine, must be pursu'd, You are now to be treated with nothing but wholesome Words; nothing but the faithful sayings of God.

I. And what Better, what other Answer can be given, (Other Foundation can no man Lay!) to this Question, but what the Apostles of God gave to it of old? When the poor man said what must I do to be Saved, we read they said Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. This is the Sum of the Gospel; This is the Charge given to the Ministers of the Gospel; Mark 16:15-16 "Preach the Gospel to every Creature. He that believeth... shall be saved."

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Only Saviour; This, This must be found in all that will be saved. The faith, which is, A satisfaction of the mind in the way of Salvation by a Glorious Christ Revealed in the Gospel. The Faith by which we deny our selves, and Rely on a Glorious Christ, for all Salvation. The Faith by which we Receive a Glorious Christ, and Rest on Him for Salvation as He is offered unto us. But How must this faith operate in all that would be saved?

Oh Set! Your Hearts to these things; they are not vain things; Your Lives, the very Lives of your Souls are concerned in them.

If your Hearts may now fall in with these things, and form'd and shap'd according to the Evangelical Mold of them lo, This Day Salvation is come unto your souls. Glorious Lord, incline the hearts of our People, to do what must be done that so thy Salvation may be bestow'd upon them.

First this must be done; You must come to be bitterly Sensible, that you want [lack] a Glorious Christ for your Saviour.

We read, John 7:37. "If any Man Thirst let him come unto me." Truly, no man will come to a Christ, until a Thirst or a pungent and Painful Sense of the Want of a Christ be raised in him.

You must feel the Burden of your sin, lying on you; and cry out, Oh' Tis a heavy Burden too heavy for me! You must see God Angry with you, Sin Binding of you, Hell gaping for you; and utterly Despair of helping yourselves out of the confusion that is come upon you.

You must be filled with sorrow, for what you have done; with horror at what you are Expos'd unto. The Cry of your Uneasy Souls must be that; of Romans 7:24. "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me!" You must be no strangers to such soliloquies as these; I have sinned; I have sinned, and, woe is unto me, that I have sinned, I have lost the knowledge of God and lost the Image of God, and lost the Favour of God. My Sin renders me obnoxious to the Vengeance of God. Lust enchants me, enslaves me; Satan Tyrannizes over me. I am in hourly Hazzard of an Eternal Banishment from God, into Outer Darkness, into the Place of Dragons. Oh! wretched man that I am: I can do nothing to deliver myself. I perish, I perish, except a Glorious Christ be my deliverer. The Degree of this Distress on the minds of them that shall be saved is Various. There is a Variety in that Preparatory Work, which does distress the Elect of God, in their coming to a Saviour. Converts do sometimes needlessly Distress themselves, and Even deceive themselves, by insisting too much on the Measure of this Preparation. But so much of this Work, as will render us restless without a Christ; so much of this Work, as will render a whole Christ precious to us before there must be so much in our Experience, if we would be saved.

Secondly; This must be Done; You must confess yourselves, Unable To Do Anything Effectually of yourselves, in coming to a glorious Christ, as your Saviour. With a fearful trembling of Soul, you must make this Profession; Lord thou worketh in us to Will and to Do, of thy own good Pleasure! Your Profession must be that of Ephesians 2:8 "By Grace are ye saved, thro' Faith and that not of yourselves it is the Gift of God." Your Profession must be that of John 6:65. "No man can come, except it be given to him." Oh! Lie at the Foot of Soverign Grace confessing and Imploring Lord, I am justly destroyed. If I do not sincerely renounce my sin, sincerely embrace my Saviour. But I cannot, Oh! I cannot! I have deadly fetters upon my Soul; I shall never answer thy gracious Calls, except thy Soverign Grace enable me. Oh! Quicken me: Oh! Strengthen me: Oh! Enable me; Turn thou me and I Shall be Turned. Your Impotency must not now be made an Excuse for your

Impenitency. Your Inability must Affright you exceedingly. Affect you Exceedingly; It may not Excuse you in a slothful Negligence. You must Not Remain Careless of doing anything, Because you can thoroughly do nothing.

Having first Cry'd unto God, that He would help you to do what you have to do, you must now try to do it; now try, whether He do not help you to do it.

Thirdly; This must be done; You must Admire, You must Adore, You must Address a Glorious Christ, in all His offices for all His Benefits. Oh! Hear a Compassionate Redeemer Calling you; Isaiah 45:22 "Look unto me all ye Ends of the Earth, and be ye Saved." Comply, Reply; Lord, I look unto thee, I will be thine, Save me. And here, you are to Remember that the First Thing you want is Attonement and Acceptance with God. For this Purpose you must behold a Glorious Christ, as a Priest bringing a Sacrifice and making a Righteousness for you Accordingly. Your first Address to Heaven must be this; Lord let my many and horrid sins be Forgiven me for the sake of that great Sacrifice, which thou hast had in the Blood of Jesus Christ thy Son, which Cleanseth from all sin. And Lord Let me who am a poor Sinner utterly hopeless of working out for myself a Righteousness now stand before Thee in the wondrous Righteousness of that Lord, who is the Head of His church, and who has wrought out a Spotless Righteousness for us. But Remember to Depend on this most sufficient Sacrifice and Righteousness, not as Qualified for it by any good Thing to be observed in yourselves. Do not stay from it on a Prospect anon to come recommended unto it by some commendable goodness in yourselves first attained. No Depend, and Venture upon it, as Encouraged by no other Qualification but this; A most miserable Sinner; yet invited, yet Compelled unto this Mercy of the Lord.

Well; If the Faith which has got thus far, be not a counterfeit, it wont stop here. You must behold a glorious Christ, as a Prophet, and a King. Faith has other errands unto the Saviour besides that, of a desire to be Justified. A true Believer will not count himself saved, if he be not Sanctified, as well as justified. The Saviour puts this demand unto you; Matthew 20:32 What will ye that I shall do unto you? You answer; O, my great Saviour I come unto thee that by thy being my Sacrifice and my Righteousness and my Advocate, Everliving to make Intercession for me, I may be Saved unto the Uttermost. But this must not be all. There must be this in the Answer, O my Saviour I come unto thee for Instruction: Let thy Spirit with thy Word cause me to Know the Things of my Peace, and keep me from all Delusions. And there must be this in the Answer, O my Saviour I come unto thee for Government: Let thy Spirit of Grace, conquer the Enmity of my Heart against the things that are pleasing to God and make me a conquerer over all my Spiritual Adversaries. This is that Faith, whereof the End is the Salvation of the Soul. Believe after this manner, and you believe to the Saving of the Soul.

II. But we may carry on the Answer, without being reprov'd for adding anything unto the words of God. A true Faith, will always have Repentance accompanying of it.

Repentance unto life; 'Tis a Dead Faith which cannot show it; A Dead Soul that has it not, A genuine Faith is always a Repenting Faith. We see the two sisters hand in hand; Acts 20:21 Repentance towards God and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. We constantly see it in the Experience of all the Faithful. 'Tis the Denomination of Repentance; 2 Corinthians 7:10. Repentance to Salvation. It must be found in all the Candidates of Salvation.

Well then; First; This must be done; You must heartily and bitterly Bewail all your Sins. Your Original Sin, your Actual Sin; the monstrous Aggravation of your Sin; You must be convinced of it. A contrition must follow this conviction; With a Broken heart you must cry out, Psalms 38:18 "I will declare my iniquity, I will be sorry for my Sin."

You must mourn for your Sin, and mourn for the Offence given to God by your Sin, as well as for the Mischief done to yourselves: Mourn, Mourn, and never count that you have mourned enough.

Secondly; This must be done You must make a Penitent Confession of your Sins; a Remorseful confession of them, All your known crimes, you must as particularly as you can, Enumerate with shame and grief before the Lord.

You must be able to say; Psalms 51:3, "I acknowledge my Transgressions and my Sin is ever before me. Your Acknowledgement of your secret Sins must be only to the Lord: but where your Sins are Known, where your Neighbors have been either Sufferers by, or Witnesses of your Miscarriages, they also should Know that you acknowledge them.

Thirdly; This must be done; Every way of Sin must be Abhorr'd, must be Avoided, must be Forsaken.

Amendment is Essential to Repentance: Except you reform you don't repent. So you are warn'd of God; Proverbs 28:13. "He that confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy." If you go on in any Evident way of Sin you will find it a Way of Death, a Path of the Destroyer; it will bring to a Damnation that slumbereth not.

Very tremendous Things will be done to those Enemies of God, who go on still in their trespasses. Have you done Amiss? You must say I will do so no more you must not persist in what you have done. And hence, if you have wrong'd another man in what you have done, you must Vigorously Endeavour all possible restitution, restitution, a Thing too little understood, too little exhorted, too little practised; restitution without which there can be no right repentance. This is the Repentance which is found in every true believer; It must be found in every one that would be saved.

III. And, Holiness, Holiness; A patient continuance in will doing.

There is No Life in the Faith, which is not Productive to an Holy Life; 'Tis not a Faith which will bring to everlasting Life. If the Grace to Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, be infused into the Soul, the Habit of every other Grace is at the same Instant infused.

I will show you the Motto on the Golden Gates of the Holy City; Hebrews 12:14. "Without Holiness no man shall see the Lord." An Holy Life, A Life pressing after Universal and Perpetual conformity to the Rules of Holiness; This, This is the Royal Path leading to salvation; Yea, tis no little part of our Salvation. This must be done; You must Resign yourselves up unto the Holy Spirit of the Lord; Consent, Request, Entreat, That He would Eternally take Possession of you. From the Dust, cry unto Him; Psalms 141:10. "Thou art my God thy Spirit is good; lead me unto the land of Rectitude." Cry unto Him; O Spirit of Holiness, Raise me out of the Ruins that my Sin has brought upon me. Possess me forever. Cause me to fear God, and Love Christ, and hate Sin, and slight this World and know myself, and make me meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; Bring me to be one of them, I pray thee, I pray thee! There is a good Foundation of Holiness laid in this resignation. But then, This must be done; You must Livelily Pursue the Death of Every Sin.

You must fly to the Death of your Saviour, as the purchase and the Pattern of so great a Blessing; but you must count no Trouble too much to be undergone, that you may come at such a Blessing. This is that Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. This must be done: You must set before yourselves the Example of your Saviour: Study how He was in the World; Study to walk as He walked; mightily Delight in every stroke of Resemblance unto Him; Yea, tho' it be in Sufferings that you resemble him. This is that Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. This must be done; You must by a solemn Dedication of yourselves, and your All unto the Lord, become the Lord's.

It must therefore be your Desire to have all your Talents, all your Possessions, and Enjoyments and Interests employ'd for the Honour of the Lord: and owning the Lord, as the great Giver, and Owner, the Lord Proprietor of all that you have, you must be ready to submit unto the will of God when he pleases with afflictive Dispensations to take any of it from you. This is the Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. This must be done; You must remember, That the Eye of the omnipotent God is upon you,

You must often bring this to remembrance, God sees me, hears me, knows me, is acquainted with all my ways, A sense of your being under the Notice of God, and of the Account unto which you will be called by God must make you afraid of incurring His Displeasure; Afraid even of Secret Miscarriages. This is that Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. This must be done: You must make it your Exercise to keep a conscience clear of Offence towards God and towards Man.

You must labour to be Acquainted with your Whole Duty; and your Acquaintance with the Will of God must be followed with proportionable Desires and Labours after Obedience to it.

You must Pray always with all Prayer, with secret Prayer, with Household Prayer, with Public Prayer.

You must have an High Value for those two Sacraments of the New Testament, the Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

You must religiously Observe the Lord's Day.

You must Preserve your own Place and Life and Bed and Wealth and Name: You must, with the same Sincerity, befriend your Neighbours also in theirs. Love your Neighbours as yourselves, and Do as you would be Done unto.

You must be especially and mightily conscientious of Relative Christianity. Carry it well in all the Relations wherein the Lord has placed you, whether Superiors, or Inferiors, or Equals; with such a Carriage as may adorn the Doctrine of God your Saviour; such a Carriage as may render your co-relatives the better for you.

Briefly, You must Deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts and Live godily and soberly and righteously in the World. This is that Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

Methinks a most Obvious Inference may be drawn from these Things, That the Ministry of the Gospel must be attended, and not neglected, by them who would not neglect the great Salvation; A most awful Inference, That it is a dangerous Thing to live without the means of Salvation, which

are in the ministry of the [True] Gospel ordinarily to be met withal. The Wells of Salvation are kept open in such a ministry. Oh! Do not undervalue the Blessings of those Upper Springs! There are men, who by the command of a glorious Christ, give themselves up unto the service of the Evangelical Ministry, and are the Preachers of the Gospel unto the rest of the world: An order of men concerning whom our glorious Lord has promised Matthew 28:20, "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world." If an Angel should come from Heaven unto you as unto Cornelius, once to Speak unto this Question, What must I do to be saved? He would unquestionably say, Repair to such a ministry don't think to live without it.

We have settled the Point; Without Faith we can have no Salvation. But I assume: Romans 10:14, Romans 10:17 "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Oh! That the Ungospelized Plantations which live, I should rather say, which die, without the means of salvation, would consider of it. Your Question is answered. O souls in Peril, I may now say unto you; 1 Corinthians 15:2 "You are saved if you keep in memory what I have preached unto you." And yet I must say unto you, That if after all, you trample upon these things, it will be good for you that you had never been born; the very mention of them will dreadfully increase and inflame your condemnation. But the success of all must be left with the Glorious One. And O Father of mercies, Do thou mercifully look down upon the Soul that has heard these Things. Dispose and assist that soul, to do those Good Things, upon which thou hast promised the salvation of the soul. I Pray thee, I Pray thee!

Awake up my soul! the awful day, Is coming swiftly on, When thou must leave this House of Clay,
And fly to Worlds unknown.

Oh! do not pass thy Life in Dreams, To be surpriz'd by Death: And drop unthinking down to
Flames, When I resign my Breath.

No: every day thy Course review, Thy real State to learn: And with an ardent Zeal pursue Thy
Great and Chief concern.

Rouze all the man: thy Work is great, And all the man demands;

Thine Head, thine Heart, thy Breath, thy Sweat, Thy Strength and both thine Hands.

Oh! let the important Work be done, Done whilst 'tis call'd to Day.

Lest thou the time of Hope out-run, And rue the mad Delay.

Repent (my soul) Believe and Pray:

Bid every lust farewell. To thy Redeemer haste away, And scape from Death and Hell. To whom
Dear Jesus, should I live To whom but Thee alone.

Thou didst at first my being give, And I am all Thine own. To Thee I'll then my self devote, My Life
and all my Pow'rs.

Each warm affection, busy thought, And all my passing Hours.

O Let those glorious Hopes refine, And elevate my Soul. To heavenly Things my Heart incline,
And meaner Joys control. May Faith and Hope stretch all their wings, And bear me up on high;
And as I mount may Earthly Things, Below unheeded lie.

JESUS my Saviour and my God, My Life and Sacrifice, My Hopes deep founded in thy Blood,
Raise far above the skies.

Prepare me, Lord, for thy Right Hand, Then come the joyful Day:

Come Death, and come Celestial band, To bear my Soul away.

FINIS

02 - The Duties of Children to their Parents

The Duties of Children to their Parents by Cotton Mather Deuteronomy 27:14, Deuteronomy 27:16
The Levites shall speak, and shall say unto all the Men of Israel, with a loud voice:

Cursed is he that setteth Light, By his Father or his Mother. And All the people shall say, Amen.

I am going to Entertain you with a Discourse, that cannot have a fitter preface, than those words in Psalms 34:11: Come, ye Children; Harken unto me, I will teach you the Fear of the Lord. The Children of my Neighbors are now appearing among us. Yea, Our Little Ones are no Little part of the Assembly. And very many of these are the Children of Pious Parents, the Children whose Piety has therefore been fervently desired and required by their Parents. Come, Ye Children, Harken to me; I will tell you, what you shall do, that your Parents may be Happy in you, and that your own Happiness may be secured and increased.

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

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

Until the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ arrive unto us, the Law does pronounce unto us nothing but Curses, we hear nothing but a Thunder of Wrath Cursing of us. The Second of the Direful Curses, which the Levites of God, facing to Mount Ebal, pronounced was, Cursed be he that sets Light by his Father or his Mother.

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

We read, that when the thing thus Appointed, was first observed by the Tribes of Israel, in the Days of Joshua, [Joshua 8:35]. There were the Little Ones, in the Congregation. It is not amiss, that there are so many Little Ones in the Great Congregation here come together; and unto Them especially, am I now to bring that Warning from God. The heavy Curse of God, Will fall upon those Children, That make Light of their Parents. To Set Light by one's Parents, is in other words, to Treat them with any Ungodly Contempt: And, you mind it, My Children, that the Curse of God is denounced, not only upon Children, which cast Contempt upon their Fathers:

Oftentimes the Fathers have the Wisdom to keep up their Authority, and keep themselves above the Contempt of their Children. But the Mothers do more frequently by their Fondness, and Weakness, bring upon themselves, the Contempt of their Children, and Lay themselves Low, by many Impertinencies.

Now, behold, the Admonition of Heaven; the Children which cast Contempt upon their Mothers do also bring themselves under the Curse of God. The Curse of God! The Terriblest Thing that ever was heard of; The First born of Terribles! Can't I mention this Tremendous Thing, The Curse of God; and, Oh, My Children, Will not you Tremble at it? Who can forbear crying out, as Elihu did, when he heard the Thunders of God railing in the Heavens over him, At this my heart even Trembles, and it is moved out of its place! I hope, none of you are come to such a Degree of Atheism, as to Defy, the Curse of God: You won't mock at the Fear of the most Fearful Thing, in the World. But give me your Attention, while I do from the Oracles of the Almighty God, handle that CASE among you.

C A S E

What Respect, to their Parents must be rendered by the Children, that would not by Affronts to their Parents, bring down upon themselves the dreadful Curses of God? The Lessons, which I have now to Set you, My Children, be these.

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

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

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

But, I beseech of you, O Parents, that be your Exasperations What they will, you forbear to use any Imprecations on your Children. Alas, They will be Cursed Children fast enough, without the least ill wish of yours to hasten it. When it was Instituted, that the Levites were to proclaim, Cursed is he that sets Light by his Father, or his Mother, One part of the Institution was, All the people shall say, Amen. Truly, it often comes to pass, that when the Curses of God come upon them that set Light by their Parents, it shall be so, that all the people shall take Notice of it; all the people shall see an Amen, set unto it, shall see it Ratified. Children, I must be a little particular with you.

First. Undutiful Children, for the Sin of the Contempt they cast upon their Parents, are often Cursed by God, with being Left unto yet more Sin against Him. I could not have spoken a more Terrible word! This is most certain, The more Sinful any man is, the more Cursed is that man. It is an amazing Vengeance of God, that gives a Sinner up to Sin for Sin, and Curses a Sinner for one Sin, by Leaving him to another. But Undutiful Children, are commonly Cursed, and Banned by such a Vengeance of God. We read of some Sinners, whom the Justice of God gives up to Sin, and this is one Brand upon those doleful Sinners, in Romans 1:30 : Disobedient unto Parents. The

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

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

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

Secondly, Undutiful Children for the Contempt they cast upon their Parents are often Cursed by God, with a Mischief brought upon all their Affairs. A Strange Disaster uses to follow Undutiful Children, much Evil pursues that kind of Sinner; there is a secret Vengeance of God, perplexing their Affairs; through that Vengeance of God, None of their Affairs do prosper with them. When David was vexed with one of his Undutiful Children, he could foretell, in Psalms 55:19. God shall Afflict them. There is a Secret Blast of God, upon Undutiful Children.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thirdly, Death; Yea, an Early Death, and a Woeful Death, is not seldom the Curse of God upon Undutiful Children for their being so. It is the Tenour of the Precept, Honour thy Father and thy

Mother, that thy Days may be long upon the Land. Mind it, Children; Your Days are not like to be long upon the Land, if you Set Light by your Father or Mother. When Absalom, with his Cruelty, was manifesting a Bloody Undutifulness, his offended Father predicted thus much, That those bloody and crafty men, should not Live out half their Days. Why, he knew, that the very Finger of God, had once written as much as this comes to; That Children, which did not Honour their Parents, must not look to have their Days long in the Land.

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

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

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

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

It becomes Children to reckon it one main Design, and Business, and privilege of their Life, to be Comforts unto their Parents: When they cease to do so, God with a direful Curse often gives that Order about them, Take away the Life of that Undutiful Creature! That Creature shall no longer Live in the World. It was an Edict of Heaven, in Exodus 21:17. He that curseth his Father or his Mother, shall surely be put unto Death. And what shall then be done unto the Children, that prove Curses unto their Father, or their Mother? Undutiful Children are so; But the Curse of God puts them to Death for it: And because those Undutiful Children are Wicked over much, therefore they Die before their Time.

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

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

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

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

More than so; Undutiful Children are Unnatural Children; And the Curse of God sometimes gives over Unnatural Children to commit the most Unnatural Murders. They have Murdered themselves, and been Self-Destroyers: As they have Sinn'd against Nature, so they Die the most against Nature, that can be. A Young man in this Country Drown'd himself; but he Left behind him a Writing to his Father, wherein he complain'd, O Father, I have kept my Soul, as long as I could; My Ruin was the pride and stubbornness of my Tender Years! But is this all? No; Lastly; All the Curse of God upon Undutiful Children hitherto, is but the Death, riding the Pale Horse in the Revelation; whereof 'tis said, Hell followed. I am after all to tell you, That the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, will be the portion of Undutiful Children after all; Children that cast Contempt upon their Parents, God will cast into the Vengeance of Eternal Fire at the Last, and into Everlasting Contempt.

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

Undutiful Children, what are they, but the Children of Belial? This is as much as to say, they are the Children of Satan; and unto Satan they shall go. The Bible has call'd 'em, The Children of the Devil; And whither shall the Children of the Devil go, but into the Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels? The Fiends of Darkness, will be the Ravens, and the Eagles, that shall fasten their Talons, in the Eyes of those Children. When our Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of the World, foretells, that in the Day of Judgment, having said unto those on His Right Hand, Come ye Blessed, He will say unto those on His Left Hand, Depart, ye Cursed, into Everlasting Fire, with the Devil and his Angels; He seems to allude unto the action between Gerizzim and Ebal. Truly, the Children Damn'd of old, upon Mount Ebal, for Setting Light by their Father or their Mother, will be They, whom the Lord Jesus Christ, will one Day Doom, to Depart from Him into Everlasting Fire, with the Devil and his Angels. It was said, in Proverbs 20:20 - Whoso curseth his Father, or his Mother, his Lamp shall be put out in Obscure Darkness.

Children, If by Undutifulness to your Parents, you incur the Curse of God, it won't be Long before you go down into Obscure Darkness, even, into Utter Darkness: God has Reserv'd for you the Blackness of Darkness forever. Be it known to you; that Undutifulness to your Parents, will bring you to feel many Stripes, from an Enrag'd Conscience in the World to come; for you know the Will of God; Your Undutifulness is a Sin against your Conscience.

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

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

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

II. Let the Signal Blessings of God, upon Children who treat their Parents with due Respect, find much Respect with you, be a great Encouragement unto you, have a strong Impression upon you. The Levites, as far as we understand, were to turn unto Mount Gerizzim, and with a loud voice to say, Blessed be he, who doth not set Light by his Father, or his Mother: And all the people were to say, Amen.

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

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

O the Blessings that belong to Children of such a Character! If it might be said, as it was by David, when God gave the Temple of the Lord; in Psalms 127:5 Blessed is the man, that hath his Quiver full of such Arrows; Then surely, Blessed are the Arrows, that are in the Quiver of such a man! The Holy Spirit of God sets a special Remark, upon that Command, which requires Children to be Dutiful unto their Parents: in Ephesians 6:2 - 'Tis the First Command [of the Second Table] with a promise, That it may be well with thee.

It shall be well with you, O ye Dutiful Children: you have the word of a God for it. You may note it, That in the Command, what we Translate, That thy Days may be Long, is to be read, That they may prolong thy Days. Who are those They? They are thy Father, and thy Mother. But how can thy Father, and thy Mother, prolong thy Days? How, but by Blessing of thee, in the Name of the Almighty God.

If the Days of such a Child be not prolong'd, we must allow a Sovereignty in such Dispensations of Heaven; but there is cause to hope, for such a Child, that God has prolong'd his Days, in the happiness of the Heavenly Word. This is plain; Those Parents, that are Blessed with Dutiful Children, do with an inexpressible Agony wish all sorts of Blessings to their Children. If it were in their power, to confer Blessings upon their Children; Oh, how much would they do for them!

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

I assure you, such Benedictions from obliged Parents, have a more than ordinary Authority, and Efficacy in them. For one's Parents to go before God, and plead, Ah, Lord, such a Child of mine, has Loved me, and Served me, and Helped me; and his good Carriage is to me, has been such, that even upon that Account I have reason to wish him all the good in the world: I therefore bring that Child unto thee, and I pray thee to Bless him with all Blessings of Goodness: To be thus Blessed by one's Parents, O my Children, 'tis a thing of more value than if a rich Inheritance were to be received from them. This is very certain, There is no point of Religion, more certainly and commonly Rewarded with Blessings in this world, than that of rendering unto Parents the Dues that pertain unto them. A signal Prosperity, even in this world, uses to attend those Children, that are very Obedient or Serviceable unto their Parents. Those Reckabites, that Obey the Commandment of their Father, Thus said the Lord of Hosts, They shall stand before me forever.

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

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

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

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

David had been a Son, very Tender of his Parents: and now, says, David, in Psalms 27:10 : When my Father and my Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up: He'll Requite all that I did for my Father, and my Mother. Shall I go a step further? When you yourselves also are Dead and Gone, even Your Children may Reap the Fruits of what you did for your Parents: Your Posterity, may fare the better for your Dutifulness. The Jews have a Notion among them; 'That for the sake of the Honour, that Esau paid unto his Father, the Israelites Long after might not Extirpate the Edomites, who were the Posterity of Esau. Moses tells the Israelites, You have compassed this Mountain Long Enough. Why? Because Esau compassed a Mountain in Hunting for his Father. But after all; Dutiful Children acting upon principles of Christianity, may hope to meet with their Christian Parents in Heaven; There Abraham the Religious Father, Their Isaac the Dutiful Son, there Jacob the Dutiful Grandson, are Together; Blessed are they that meet there, in the Light of the face of God; Blessed throughout Eternal Ages! Consider This, O Children; and Set not Light by your Parents. But being, by these Considerations prepared for it, it may now be Time to say;

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

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

First, You Set Light by your Parents, if you withhold from them, the Reverence that is due unto them. The God of Nature hath placed a Distance, between Parents and their Children; Children then Set Light by their Parents when they Forget this Distance.

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

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

There is an Outward Reverence, that Children owe unto their Parents. Hence 'tis said, in Malachi 1:6 : If I be a Father, where is my Honour? Hence 'tis said, in Proverbs 31:28: Her Children Rise up, and call her Blessed. Their Speeches, both to their Parents, and of their Parents, must be full of Reverence. When Children speak to their Parents, their Language must carry in it, some Acknowledgment of their being such.

Thus in Genesis 31:35: She said unto her Father, my Lord. When Children speak of their Parents, they must show a concern, that nothing Abusive be uttered. Thus, in Psalms 127:5 : The Children

of Youth, seem to Defend their Father, from the Enemies in the Gate, or, False-Accusers. And their Actions towards their Parents must yet more Emphatically Speak the Reverence, which they would Retain for them. Thus is Genesis 48:12 : Joseph bowed himself, with his Face to the Earth, before his Father. Thus in 1 Kings 2:10 : Solomon Rose up to meet his Mother, and bowed himself unto her, and She Sat on his Right Hand.

Now, Children, you Set Light by your Parents, if you Talk Saucily and Clownishly unto them; If you Reproach them, defame them, and Backbite them; if your Behaviour towards them have any malapert Impudence in it.

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

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

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

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

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

It was said, in Colossians 3:20 : Children, Obey your Parents in all Things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. But, Children, You Set Light by your Parents, if it be not also very Well-pleasing unto You, to Please them, so far as without Sin you may do it; and if you be not unwilling at any Time, to give them any Displeasure. When the Father of Joseph laid his commands upon him, he obey'd those commands, though with the Risk of his very Life. It should be the very Joy of your Life, to yield Obedience unto the commands of your Parents. Do your Parents give you any Instruction? You are call'd upon, in Proverbs 4:1: Hear, ye Children, the Instruction of a Father." Most of all, in the Grand Motions & Changes of your Life, Children, your Parents are to be consulted, and the Satisfaction of your Parents is to be proposed. In your Callings, and in your Matches especially the Directions of your Parents must be of Exceeding Moment with you; Indeed Nothing should be done without them! Wherefore, Children, you Set Light by your Parents, if you make nothing of their Commands, and if you tread their just Reproofs under foot.

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

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

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

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

It was demanded, in 1 Timothy 5:4 : Let the Children Learn to show piety at home, and requite their Parents; for that is Good and Acceptable before God. Those Children have no Piety in them, they Set Light by God, as well as by their Parents, unto whom it is not a most Acceptable Thing to make some Recompence unto their Parents, for all the vast Benefits which their Parents have heaped upon them.

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

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

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

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

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

Natural Parents cannot safely come under the Contempt of their Children: God will Curse the Children that Set Light by Them; and can you dream then, that God will allow any Contempt of Political Parents, of Ecclesiastical, or of Scholastical?

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

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

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

Because thy Superiours in the Family, are thy Parents, therefore there is laid that Charge of God upon thee in 1 Peter 2:18 : Servants, be subject unto your Masters, with all Fear, not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward. The Proud hearts of many Servants, make them discontent at their Servile State. The Subjection expected from them throws them into a very

crumbling Discontent.

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

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

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

Expose not their Failings, if you see any in them. Let there be no Sullenness, no Sauciness, no Rude Retortings, in your Deportments towards them. Give them no cause to complain, with Job, I called my Servant, and he gave me no Answer. Be not those Eye Servants, that will do their Master's will, no longer than their Master's Eye is upon them; The All-seeing eye of the Almighty God is upon you.

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

Indeed, if your Masters bid you do an ill Thing, you must with modest Expostulations, rather Suffer than Obey. But if they bid you do what is Fit and Right, you Sin against God, if you do it not; If they will not obey you, Masters, Turn them out of Doors. Nor is this all that Servants have to do: Servants, you must use all Diligence, and Faithfulness, in your Master's Business. A Slothful Servant is truly called a Wicked Servant. But Eleazer, the Servant of Abraham, would not Eat his Victuals, till his Masters Business were dispatched. Let your Master's Business be honestly discharged, though you should like Jacob, when a Servant, have your Sleep departing from your Eyes. When your Masters do send you on Errands, Loiter not; Be not Sluggards to them that feed you. And be the true Sons of Israel; able to say, Thy Servants are True men. Gehazi was a Servant that Lied unto his Master; but God made that Liar to become a Leper. Of all Faults in your Servants, I advise you, Masters, never to let that of Lying be unpunished. But that of Stealing often accompanies it; of which, O Servants, beware; for God will never let That go unpunished. I vehemently call upon you, That you never venture to wrong your Masters unto the value of a Penny as long as you Live. Mark it, you'll Entail Eternal Vexations upon you, and God will make you lose a Pound for every penny, whereof you have wrong'd your Masters. Have you ever purloined from them? Oh, Fly penitently unto the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon, and make as much Restitution, and as full Reparation, as ever thou canst; or the Jealous God, will never pardon thee, till the Torments of the Damned, have Exacted the utmost Farthing from thee.

Servant, Be such a Blessing in thy Master's House, as Joseph was to his. Contrive all the ways imaginable, that thy Master may be the better for thee. It may be, thy Master will Bless God for Thee. However God will Bless thee in thy Serving of him. If you slight all these Things, Look for the Curses of God. And now, Let people Remember, That Rulers are Parents. Don't Set Light by

Them. The Charge of God upon people, is That in Titus 3:1 : Be Subject, and Obey Magistrates, and be ready to every Good Work, and speak evil of no man; much less of the Magistrates. Our Setting Light by Excellent Magistrates, has been the Scandalous Crime of our Country; and for that Crime whole Colonies may come to smart under the Revenges of God.

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

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

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

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

V. They that have at any Time Set Light by their Parents, must Go to God in Christ for His Pardons , that so His Curses may not overtake them. Who is there that can say with the Son in the Gospel: who said unto his Father, Lo, these many years do I Serve thee, neither transgressed I at any Time thy Commandment? The Dutifullest Child among us all, hath been so Defective in his Dutifulness, that he dare not plead it before God, in his Justification; He must say, as in Psalms 143:2 : Lord, Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant; for in Thy sight shall no man Living be Justified.

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

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

Children, you hear the Convex of Heaven resounding from Ebal with the Comminations of God, Cursed is he that Sets Light by his Father or his Mother. Our Consciences tell us, That we have done it many a time. Away then, Away to the Antitype of the Altar on Ebal. Oh, plead with God the Burnt Offering of Christ, and the Peace-offering of Christ, that the Curse of God may not seize upon us, that we may not be Burnt in the Flames of His Indignation, that He may be at Peace with us forever. When it was denounced Cursed is he that Sets Light by his Father or his Mother, it follow'd, that all the people said, Amen. AMEN, is the very Name of Christ. May all the people now

fly to that, AMEN,, that they may be sheltered from the Curses of God.

And, Oh, call it to mind the Example of the Lord Jesus Christ. There never was in the world, so Dutiful a Son as He! We read in Luke 2:51 : He went down with His Mother, and His Reputed Father, and though they were very Low in the World, He became subject unto them. We read in John 19:17 : That when He was in His Last Agonies, it was a Thing lying very near His Heart, that His Widow-Mother, might be provided for: He said unto a Disciple, Behold, thy Mother! Intimating that He would have him, take her Home unto his own House.

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

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

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

Moses did well, when he Harkened unto the voice of his Father-in-law, and did all that he had said. It is the voice of Heaven, in Proverbs 1:8 : My Son, Hear the Instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother. Is it not the Instruction of thy Father, That thou shouldest avoid all Vicious Company; and, That thou shouldest Pray in Secret every Day; and, That thou should Read and Hear the Word of God, with Assiduity [diligence, zeal, constancy]? Or if not so, yet it may be, the Law of thy Mother, who is in Travailing pains for thee, to see Christ formed in thee.

Now, don't Make Light of the Admonitions, with which thy Parents are thus calling upon thee. If thy Parents Enjoin upon thee any thing that is not Sinful, it will be a Sin for thee to Refuse the doing of it: How much more is the Sin, if thou dost Refuse to do what the Great God has first Comanded, and thy Parents Enjoin because the Great God has first Comanded?

Oh, my Children, I am afraid, I am afraid, there are some of you, that may read your Doom, in those Ominous words, in 1 Samuel 2:25 : They hearkened not unto the voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them.

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

'Tis told them, That the Ungodly Youths in the Town do horribly poison one another. These youths cry up an Indifferency in Religion, and say, 'Tis out of fashion for a man to be of one Religion more than another; that is, in reality to say, 'Tis out of fashion to be of any Religion at all. So they insensibly draw one another on, to deride Seriousness in Religion, and the most Serious and Lively Preachers of it; Until they become Idle, Profane, Sottish Debauchees, and betimes Ripe for the Fiery Indignation of God. Your Parents are Trembling, with an unknown Distress and Anguish, Lest you be Entangled in a Familiarity with these Ungodly Youths. It fills your Parents with a grievous Horror, That they cannot see the marks of a Regenerate Soul upon you; They never hear you let fall a word, that may discover in you the least care of a Never-dying Soul. They cannot find out that there are any Transactions between the Lord Jesus and you, about the Salvation of a Soul

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

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

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

Ah, Vain Children; Give, Give some Relief to this Grief of your Parents. Fall down before the Lord, and say, Lord, Thou shalt be my Father, and the Guide of my Youth. Turn to God in Christ, and become Devout Children. Then, say they, My Heart, O my Children, shall Rejoice, even mine! But your Parents count that you make Light of them, so long as you Lightly Esteem the Rock of your Salvation, and make Light of God, and Christ, and the Covenant of Grace. And now, I Earnestly testify unto you, That if you Go on, to Sin against God, and against your Parents, the Curses of the great God are impending over you. Those Curses will horribly Wound the Head of those that go on still in their Trespasses.

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

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

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

Oh Tis to be Feared, That many of our Young People, who have died at home and abroad, and after the Madness of that Ungodly Life, by which they broke the Hearts of their Parents, are Gone unto the Dead; if they could in Ghost now appear unto their Fellow-Sinners, yet Surviving, they would horribly Cry out, I am Damned! I am Damned, for my Ungodliness! But you have Enough to Warn you, against all Ungodliness, without One Coming to you from the Dead. And while we thus Warn you, there is this terrible Intimation to be added unto all the rest.

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

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

and say, I will Surely have Mercy upon them.

03 - The Duties of Parents To Their Children

The Duties of Parents To Their Children by Cotton Mather

Genesis 18:19 I know him, That he will command his Children And his Household after him, And they shall keep the way of the Lord. As the Great God, who at the Beginning said, Let Us make man after our Image, hath made man a Sociable creature, so it is evident, That Families are the Nurseries of all Societies; and the First combinations of mankind. Well-ordered Families naturally produce a Good Order in other Societies. When Families are under an ill Discipline, all other Societies being therefore ill Disciplined, will feel that Error in the First Concoction. To Serve the Families of our Neighborhood, will be a Service to all our Interests. Every serious Christian is concerned, That he may be Serviceable in the World; And many a serious Christian is concerned, because he sees himself to be furnished with no more Opportunities to be Serviceable. But art thou not a Member of some Family? If that Family may by thy means, O Christian, become a Well-regulated Family, in that point thou wilt become Serviceable; I had almost said, Incomprehensibly Serviceable.

They that have the Government of some Family, do make up no Little part of this Great Assembly. And, Sirs, are there any of you, that would forfeit that Honorable Title, of all the Faithful, The Children of Abraham? Give your Attention, ye Children of Abraham, while I set before you, the Example of your Father for your imitation. Our Glorious Lord-Messiah, is here going to Communicate unto Abraham some of His Heavenly Counsels. And we have a Text before us, that assigns a Reason for that gracious Communication. The Reason is, the care which this Good man, would thereupon take to bring up his Family in the Fear of God. In this Text there are some Remarkable Things; and things that some Wise men have often remarked. There was an Excellent man, sometimes a Preacher of the Lord Jesus Christ, in this very place; whose custom it was, not only to Read a portion of the Scripture before his Prayers with his Family, but also to Infer and Apply brief Notes out of what he Read. He professed, That he found none of all his weary Studies in Divinity, so profitable to him, as this one Exercise, for the Rare and Rich Thoughts, which he therein found himself supplied withal, And he Declared, "that he looked on it as an accomplishment of this very word; Shall I hide from Abraham, the thing which I do? I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Household.

Moreover, You may here Observe a most comfortable Connection, between, He will, and They Shall. Say's the Lord, He will Command his Children, and They shall keep the way of the Lord. It seems, If every one that is Owner of a Family, would faithfully Command, and manage those that belong unto him, through the Blessing of God, they would generally Keep His Way, and His Law.

I find a famous Writer in the Church, therefore thus expressing himself; "If Parents did their Duties as they ought, the Word Publically Preached would not be the ordinary means of Regeneration in the Church, but only without the Church, among Infidels: God would so pour out His Grace upon the Children of His people, and Hear Prayers for them, and bless Endeavours for their Holy Education, that we should see the Promises made Good unto our Seed."

We will now Dismiss these Reflections; and Repair to that Grand Case, which hence offers itself unto us. The Case What May Be Done by Pious Parents, to Promote the Piety and Salvation of Their Children? The Case Inquires, What may be done? You will take it for granted, that the Answer to it will tell you, What Should be done? For you will readily grant, that in such an Important Case as this, All that May be done, Should be done! In the Case We Inquire after what is to be done, by Pious Parents. Other Parents will take no due Notice, of the Injunctions that God has Laid upon them concerning their Children.

Parents, If you don't first become yourselves Pious, you will do nothing to purpose to make your Children so.

Except you do yourselves walk in the Way of the Lord, you will be very careless about bringing your Children to such a Walk.

It is not a Cain, or a Cham, or any Enemy of God; that will do anything to make his Children become the Children of God. The Psalmist in Psalms 34:1, Psalms 34:4, Psalms 34:11, could first say I will bless the Lord and I sought the Lord, and then he says, Come ye Children, and I will teach you the Fear of the Lord.

O Parents, In the Name of God, Look after your own miserable Souls; How should those wretched people do anything for the Souls of their Children, that never did anything for their own? In the Case, we Inquire, after what is to be done by Parents for their Children. But let it be Remembered, That our Servants [others in our home] are in some sort likewise our Children. Our whole Household, as well as the Children that are our Offspring, are to be taught the Way of the Lord. An Abraham will have his Trained Servants. We read concerning a certain Person of Quality, in 2 Kings 5:13. His servants came near and spake unto him, and said, My Father.

Let not those of my Hearers, that are without such Invaluable Blessings of God, as Children, count themselves unconcerned in our Discourse, if they have any Servants under them. A considerable part of what is to be done for our Children, I pray, Masters, think, as we go along; Think, without our particular inculcation, whether nothing. This may be done for your Servants: and, God make Eliezers of them for you!

Attend Now To The Counsils of God

I. Parents, Consider the Condition of your Children; and the loud cry of their Condition unto you, to Endeavour their Salvation! What an Army of powerful Thoughts, do at once now show themselves, to beseige your Hearts, and subdue them unto a just care for the Salvation of your Children!

Know you not, that your Children have precious and Immortal Souls within them? They are not all Flesh. You that are the Parents of their Flesh, must know, That your Children have Spirits also, whereof you are told, in Hebrews 12:9. God is the Father of them; and in Ecclesiastes 12:7. God is the Giver of them. The Souls of your Children, must survive their Bodies, and are transcendently Better and Higher & Nobler Things than their Bodies. Are you sollicitous that their Bodies may be Fed? You should be more sollicitous that their Souls may not be Starved, or go without the Bread of Life. Are you sollicitous that their Bodies may be Cloath'd: you should be more sollicitous that their Souls may not be Naked, or go without the Garments of Righteousness. Are you Loath to have their Bodies Labouring under Infirmitities, or Deformaties? You should be much more Loath to

have their Souls pining away in their Iniquities.

Man, Are thy Children, but the Children of Swine? If thou art Regardless of their Souls, truly thou dost call them so!

One of the Ancients, namely Cyprian, has a pungent comparison for this matter; Pray, Consider; (said that Great man) He that minds his Childs Body more than his Soul, is like, one, that if his Child and his Dog were like to be drowned, should be solicitous to save his Dog, but let the Child perish in the water.

How deaf art thou, that thou dost not hear a loud cry from the Souls of thy Children in thine Ears, Oh, my Father, my Mother, look after me! But more than so; Don't you know, That your Children, are the Children of Death, and the Children of Hell, and the Children of Wrath, by Nature: And that from you, this Nature is derived and conveyed unto them!

You must know, Parents, that your Children are by your means Born under the dreadful Wrath of God: And if they are not New-Born before they die, it had been Good for them, that they never had been Born at all. The law of equity was in Exodus 21:19 If one man wound another, he shalt cause him to be thoroughly healed. Your Children are born with deadly wounds of Sin upon their Souls; and they may Thank you for those wounds: Unjust men, will you now do nothing for their Healing?

Man, thy Children are dying of an horrid poison, in their Bowels; and it was thou that poison'd them. What! Wilt thou do nothing for the succour [help]! Thy Children are thrown into a Devouring Fire; and it is from thee that the Fiery Vengeance of God has taken Hold of them. What! Wilt thou do nothing to Help them out!

There is a Corrupt Nature in thy children, which is a Fountain of all Wickedness and Confusion. The very Pagans were not insensible of this Corrupt Nature; they styled it our Congenite [congenital] Sin, and our Domestick Evil, and cried out, with Tully, "Simul ac Editi sumus in Lucem, ac suscepti, in omni continue pravitate versamur. The Jews have been yet more Sensible of this Corrupt Nature; they have Stil'd it, our Evil Frame and the poison of the old Serpent; and This they understand by The Enemy, so often mentioned in the Scripture; And, The Heart of Stone and, the Wicked that watches the Righteous. Will not you that are Christians, then show your Christianity, by Sensibly doing what you can, that your Children may have a Better Nature infused into them?

What shall I Say? I may say, The Time would fail me to mention a thousandth part of what might be said. But, in short: Is it not a sad Thing to be the Father of a fool?

Alas, man, till thy Children become Regenerate, thou art the Father of a Fool; Thy Children are but the Wild Asses Colt! I add; would it not Break thy Heart, if thy Children, were in Slavery to Turks, or Moors, or Indians?

Devils are worse than Indians, and Infidels: till thy Children are brought home to God, they are the slaves of Devils. In a word; Can thy Heart Endure, that thy Children, should be Banished from the Lord Jesus Christ, and Languishing under the Torments of Sin among Devils, in outer Darkness throughout Eternal Ages?

Don't call thyself a Parent; Thou art an Ostrich [they care not for their offspring]. Call not these, the Children of thy Bowels; thou hast no Bowels! I will not say, that Zipporah call'd her Husband, A

Bloody Husband. But all the Angels in Heaven call thee, A Bloody Father, and A Bloody Mother; and are astonished at the Adamantine Hardness of that Bloody Heart of thine; and those Heartstrings that are Sinewes of Iron!

II. Improve the Baptism of your children, as an obligation, and an encouragement unto you, parents, to endeavour the salvation of your Baptised little ones. Of your children, you may say, with Jacob, in Genesis 33:5 These are the children that God hath graciously given to me. Now, will not you heartily give back those children to God again: their Baptism is to be the sign and seal of your doing so.

You generally bring your infant children unto the Baptism of the Lord: I suppose, it is because you are satisfied, that the children of believers were in the Covenant with God, in the days of the Old Testament; and, that the children of believers then had a right unto the initial seal of the Covenant, and, that in the days of the New Testament they have not lost this priviledge.

Well, but when you bring your children to the Sacred Baptism, what is it for? Oh, let it not be done, as an empty formality; as if the Baptism of your children were for nothing, but only a formal and a pompous putting of a name upon them.

No, but let the serious language of your souls, in this action, be that of Hannah, in 1 Samuel 1:28: I have given this child unto the Lord, as long as he lives, he shall be given unto the Lord.

I find in the private writings of an holy man, who died in this place, not much above a year ago; That the day before one of his children was to be Baptised, he spent the time in giving up himself and his child unto the Lord, and in taking hold of the Covenant for both of them, and in praying that he might on the morrow, be able in much faith and love and Covenant obedience, to do it, at the Baptism of the Lord. Oh, which he writes it is not easy, though common, to offer a child unto God in Baptism.

Sirs, when you have done this for your Children, you have a singular advantage to plead for the fulfillment of that word upon them in Isaiah 44:3 I will pour my Spirit upon thy Soul, and my blessing upon thy offspring. You may go before the Lord, and plead, Lord, Was not the Baptismal water poured by thy command upon my children! Oh, do thou now pour upon them the heavenly grace, which that Baptismal water signified. And now, no sooner let those Children become able to understand it, than you shall make them understand what the design of their Baptism was. Parents, I am to tell you, that if you let your Children grow up, without ever telling them, that, and, why, they were Baptised into the Name of the Lord, you are fearfully guilty of taking the name of the Lord in vain.

It was the manner of an excellent minister, upon the Baptising of a child, solemnly to deliver the child into the hands of the Parents, with such words as those, here, take this child now, and bring it up for the Lord Jesus Christ, I charge you.

God from Heaven speaks the like words to you, O Parents, upon all your Baptised Children. And that you may bring up your Children for the Lord Jesus Christ, you must as soon as you can, let them know, that in Baptism, they were dedicated unto Him.

Show them that when they were Baptised, they were listed among the servants and soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that if they live in rebellion against Him, Woe unto them!

Show them, from Matthew 28:19-20. That since they are Baptised into the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, they must observe all things, whatsoever the Lord Jesus Christ, has commanded them.

Show them from Romans 6:4, that since they are Baptised, they are Buried with Christ in baptism, and must live no longer in sin, but be Dead unto all the Vanities of the World.

Show them from Galatians 3:27, that since they are Baptised, they have put on Christ, and must follow His Example, and be as He was in the World.

Show them from 1 Peter 3:21, that being Baptised, they must now make the Answer of a good conscience, to all the proposals of the New-Covenant: and God propounding to them, shall my Christ be thine, and wilt thou be His? They must conscientiously answer, Lord, with all my heart!

Put this very solemnly unto your children; My child, shall God the Father, be thy Father? Shall God the Son, be thy Saviour! Shall God the Spirit, be thy Sanctifier; and are thou willing to be the servant of that one God, who is, Father, Son, and Spirit?

Leave them not, until their little hearts are conquered unto that for which they have been Baptised. It has been the judgment of some Judicious men; that If infant baptism were more improved, it would be less disputed. Oh, that it were thus Improved.

III. Instruct your children in the great matters of Salvation; Oh, Parents, do not let them die without instruction.

There is indeed, an Instruction in Civil Matters which we owe unto our Children. It is very pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ, that our Children be well formed with, and well informed in the rules of Civility, and not be left a Clownish, and Sottish, and Ill Bred sort of Creatures. An Unmannerly Brood is a Dishonour to Religion.

And, there are many points of a Good Education that we should bestow upon our Children; they should Read, and Write, and Cyphar [arithmetic], and be put unto some Agreeable Callings; and not only our Sons, but our Daughters also should be taught such things, as will afterwards make them useful in their places. There is a little Foundation of Religion laid in such an Education. But besides, and beyond all this, there is an Instruction in Divine Matters, which our Children are to be made partakers of.

Parents, Instruct your Children, in the Articles of Religion; and acquaint them with God, and Christ, and the Mysteries of the Gospel, and the Doctrines and Methods of the Great Salvation.

It was Required, in Psalms 78:5 He commanded our Fathers, to make known to their Children, that the Generation to come might know, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their Hope in God, and keep His commandments.

It was required in Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, bring up your children in the Nurture and Admonitions of the Lord. Would you have your Children to be Wise and Good? I know not why you should expect it, unless you take abundance of pains, by your Instruction to make them so.

There was a Wise and Good son, who gave that account how he became what he was; in Proverbs 4:3-4. I was my Fathers son, and he taught me. O Begin betimes, to Tell your Children

who is their Maker, and who is their Saviour, and what they are Themselves, and what is like to become of them; and by no means let them want [lack] that Advantage in 2 Timothy 3:15 From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation.

Cause them to look often into their Bibles, and here and there Single out some special Sentences from those Oracles of Heaven for them to get into their Memories. And for the better management of their Instruction there are especially two Handles, to be laid hold upon; the one is, a Proper Catechism, the other is the Public Ministry. Be sure that they learn their Catechism very perfectly; but then content not yourselves with hearing them say by Rote the Answers in their Catechism; Question them very distinctly over again about every clause in the Answer and bring all to it so plain before them, that by their saying only, Yes, or No, you may perceive that the sense of the Truth is entered into their souls. And then, what they hear in the Evangelical Ministry, do you Apply it unto them after their coming Home; Confer with them familiarly about the Things that have been handled in the [proper and true] Ministry of the Word: go over one Thing after another, with them, till you see they have got clear Ideas of it; Then put it unto them, Are not you now to Avoid such a thing; or perform such a thing! And must not you now make such and such a prayer unto God? Bid them then, go do accordingly.

Hence also, 'twere very desireable, that you should watch all opportunities, to be instilling your Instructions into the souls of your little Folks. They are narrow-mouthed Vessles, and things must be drop after drop instilled into them. It was required in Deuteronomy 6:6,7 The words which I command thee, Thou shalt teach them Diligently unto thy Children, and shalt Talk of them, when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou sittest down and when thou riseth up.

How often in a week, are we Diverting ourselves, with our Children in our Houses? There thy stand before us; There is nothing to hinder our saying some very profitable thing for them to think upon; well, can you let fall Nothing upon them, that it will be worth their while, for them to think upon?

What, Nothing of God, and Christ, and of another World, and of their own Souls, and of the Sins that may Endanger them, and of the Ways which they may take to be Happy? Doubtless, you may say something. And who can tell? It may be after you are gone to behold the Face of the Lord Jesus Christ in Glory, these your Children will Remember Hundreds of profitable Instructions, that you have given them; and Live upon them when you that gave them, are Dead. With Two Strokes I will clench this advice. The one is that in Proverbs 22:6 Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not Depart from it. The other is that in Proverbs 17:25. A Foolish Son is a grief to his Father, and a bitterness to her that bare him.

IV. Parents, with a Sweet Authority over your Children, Rebuke them for, and Refrain them from, everything that may prove prejudicial unto their Salvation.

Sirs, You can do little for the Welfare of your Children, if once you have lost your Authority over them. Would you bring your Children to the Fear of God? Your character then must be that in 1 Timothy 3:4 One that ruleth well his own House, having his Children in subjection, with all gravity.

Don't by your Lightness and Weakness and Folly, suffer them to Trample upon you; but keep up so much Authority, that your Word may be a Law unto them. Nevertheless,

Let not your Authority be strained with such Harshness and Fierceness, as may discourage your Children. To treat our Children like Slaves, and with such Rigour, that they shall always Tremble and Abhor to come into our presence, This will be very unlike to our Heavenly Father. Our Authority should be so Tempered with Kindness, and Meekness, and Loving Tenderness, that our Children may Fear us with Delight, and see that we Love them, with as much Delight.

Now, Let our Authority, effectually keep in our Children, from all their unruly Exorbitancies and Extravagancies. If we let our Young Folks grow Head-Strong, and if we grow Afraid of compelling them to the Wholesome Orders of our Families, we have even given them up to Ruin. God brought that Son to an Untimely and a Terrible End, of whom its reported in 1 Kings 1:6 His Father had not Displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?

I beseech you, Parents, Interpose your Authority to stop and check the Carrier of your Children, when they will be running into the paths of the Destroyer.

Gratify them with Rewards of Well doing, when they Do well; but let them not be gratified with every Ungodly Vanity, that their Vain Minds may be set upon.

Wherefore keep a strict Inspection upon their Conversations; Examine, How they spend their Time; Examine, What Company they keep? Examine, Whether they take no Bad Courses. Be not such Foolish Enemies to yourselves, and your Children as to count them your Enemies, that shall friendly advise you of their Miscarriages. That wretched Folly, is a very Frequent One! When you Find out their Miscarriages, effectually Rebuke them, and Restrain them. Incurr not the Indignation of Heaven, once Incurred by a Fond Father, in 1 Samuel 3:13; I will Judge his House forever, for the Iniquity which he knoweth; because his Sons made themselves vile, and he Restraind them not.

Ah, Thou Indulgent Parent; if you canst not Cross thy Children, when they are disposed unto that which is for the Dishonour of God, God will make thy Children to become Crosses unto thee.

Sirs, When your Children do amiss, call them Aside; set before them the Precepts of God which they have broken, and the Threatenings of God, which they provoked. Demand of them, to profess their sorrow for their fault, and Resolve that they will be no more so Faulty.

Yes, there may be occasion for you, to consider that Word of God in Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his Rod, hateth his son, but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes; and that Word in Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is Hope, and let not thy soul spare for his Crying; and that word, in Proverbs 23:13,14. Withold not Correction from the Child; for if thou beatest him with the Rod, he shall not Die; Thou shalt beat him with the Rod, and shalt deliver his Soul from Hell. But if it must be so, Remember this Counsel; Never give a Blow in a passion. Stay till your passion is over; and let the Offenders plainly see, that you deal thus with them, out of a pure Obedience unto God, and for their true Repentance.

One of the ancients, has this Ingenious gloss In the tabernacle, Aarons Rod, and the Pot of Manna, were together; so (says he) when the Rod is used, the sweetness and goodness of the Manna must accompany it: and Mercy be joined with Severity. Let me leave that premonition with you, in Proverbs 29:15 A child left unto himself, bringeth his Mother to shame.

V. Lay your Charges upon your Children; Parents, Charge them to Work about their own Salvation. The Charges of Parents have a great Efficacy upon many Children; To Charge them vehemently, is to Charm them wonderfully.

Command your Children, and it may be they will Obey. Let Gods commands be your commands, and it may be your Children will obey them.

Lay upon your Children, the Charges of God, as David once upon his, in 1 Chronicles 28:9 My Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve Him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee, but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever.

Now, Sirs, You will do well, to single out some singular Charges of God, and calling your Children one by one before you, Lay those Charges upon them, in the Name of the God that made them, and obtain from them, if you can, a promise that they will observe those Charges, with the Help of that God. I will set before you, three or four of those Charges.

Let one of your Charges upon your Children, be that in 1 John 3:23 This is His commandment, that we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ.

Charge them to carry their poor, guilty, ignorant and polluted and Enslaved souls unto the Lord Jesus Christ, that He may Save them from their Sins, and Save them from the Wrath to come.

Charge them, to mind how the Lord Jesus Christ Executes the Office of a Prophet, and a Priest, and a King, and Cry to Him, that He would Save them in the Execution of all those Blessed Offices.

Let another of your Charges be that in Haggai 1:5, Haggai 1:7 Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider Your Ways. Charge them to set apart a few minutes now and then, for Consideration; and in those minutes,

Charge them to Consider, what they have been doing, and what they should have been doing, ever since they came into the World, and if they should immediately go out of the World, what will become of them throughout Eternal Ages.

I have read of a Dying Parent, who laid this Charge upon his wild Son, That he would allow one quarter of an Hour every Day to Consider on something or other, any Thing, as his Fancy led him. The Young men having for some while done so, at last began to consider, why his Dying Parent should lay such a Charge upon him. This brought on so many Devout Thoughts, that before long, in the Conversion of the Young man, the Desire of the Dying Parent was accomplished.

Oh! If you could Engage your Children to Think Upon Their Ways, there would be Hopes of their Turning to God.

But, Let a Third of your Charges, be that in Matthew 6:6 Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father that sees in secret.

Charge them to retire for Secret Prayer, every Day that comes over their Heads, Talk with them, till you see, that they can tell, what they should Pray for: and then, often Charge them to Pray every day; yea, sometimes Ask them, Do you Remember the charge I Laid upon you?

Ah, Parent, thy children will do well, while it can be said, Behold, They Pray. And thy House filled with thy Childrens Prayers, would be better accommodated , than if it were filled, with all the Riches of the Indies.

Let a Fourth of your Charges be That, in Proverbs 9:6, Forsake the Foolish and Live.

Charge them to avoid the snares of Evil Company; Terrify them with Warnings of those Deadly Snares.

Often Repeat this Charge unto them, That if there be any Vicious Company, they shun them, as they would the Plague or the Devil.

Often say, My son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

Often say, My child, walk with the Wise, and thou shalt be wise, but a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed.

Oh, Do Not let the Beasts of prey, carry away thy Children alive. Shall I add; it is here intimated, That an Abraham, is to Command his Children, very particularly, about, The Way of the Lord. The Way of the Lord, is the Way of his Right, Pure, Instituted Worship. Well, then, Command your Children, that they do not Forsake the Holy Institutions of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Embrace a Vain Worship, consisting of things that He never Instituted.

There are some clauses in the Second Commandment, which intimate, That if Parents would see the Mercies of God upon their Children, they must Charge them, to Worship God, only in those Ways of Worship that God hath appointed.

Thus keep Charging of your Children, while you Live. And if you are capable so to Do, Do it once more with all possible Solemnity, when you come to Die. The words of a Dying Parent, will probably be Living Words, and Lively Ones. When our Excellent Mitchel was a Dying, he let fall such a Speech as This, unto a Young Gentleman, that Lodged in his House, My Friend, as a Dying man, I now charge you, that you don't meet me out of Christ in the Day of Christ. This one Speech, brought into Christ, the soul of that Young Gentleman! Truly, if your Dying Lips, may utter such Dying Words unto your Children, who can tell, but they may then be brought into Christ, if they were never so before!

But, lest you should have no opportunity to Speak in a Dying Hour, why should you not Write such things, as you would have them to Think upon, when you shall be Dead and Gone? An unknown deal of Good, may your Children reap, from the Admonitions, that a Dying Parent may Leave unto them.

VI. Parents, be Exemplary: Your Example may do much towards the Salvation of your Children, your Works will more Work upon your Children, than your Words; your Patterns will do more than your Precepts; your Copies than your Counsels.

What was then said unto Pastors, may very fitly be said unto Parents, in Titus 2:2, In all Things show thyself a pattern of good works; and in 1 Timothy 4:12 Be thou an Example in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity.

It will be impossible for you to infuse any Good into your Children, if you appear void of that Good yourselves. If the Old Crab go backward, it is to no purpose, for the Young One to be directed to go forward: Sirs, Young Ones, will Crawl after the Old Ones. Would you have your Children, well principled with the Fear and Faith of God? Mind that passage, in Acts 10:2, Cornelius was a devout man, and one that Feared God, with all his House.

Mind that passage in Acts 18:8 Crispus Believed on the Lord, with all his House. It seems, the whole House, is like to do, as the Parents do. It is as Austin [Augustine] expresses it, the usual cry, *Nolumus esse meliores quam patres*, We will be no Better than our Parents, If the Parents will make their Cakes to the Queen of Heaven, the Children will kindle their Fires for them.

Justin Martyr somewhere Inquires why the Prophet Elisha imprecated the Revenges of Heaven upon the Children that mocked him, when they hardly understood what they did? and he answers, The Children Learned their wicked Language from their Parents, and now God punished both of them together.

Parents, let your Children see nothing by you, but what shall be commendable and imitable. Be able to say unto your Children, My child, follow me, as you have seen me follow Christ.

Let them from your Seriousness, and your Prayerfulness, and your Watchfulness, and your Sanctification of the Lord's Day, be taught, how they should walk and please God. You "Bid" them well; "Show" them How!

VII. Prayer, Prayer, must be the Crown of all:

Parents, is it your Hearts Desire? Let it be also your Prayer, for your Children, that they may be Saved.

Prayer for the Salvation of any Sinners, availith much. How much may it avail for the Salvation of our Sinful Children? Much availed that Prayer of David in 1 Chronicles 29:19, Lord, Give unto my Son a perfect Heart, to keep thy Commandments.

Parents, Make such a prayer for your Children, Lord, Give unto my Child, a New Heart, and a Clean Heart, and a Soft Heart; and an Heart after thy own Heart.

We have been told, that Children once were brought unto our Lord Jesus Christ, for Him to Put His hands upon them; and He Put His hands upon them, and blessed them. Oh! Thrice, and Four Times Blessed Children! Well, Parent, Bring your Children unto the Lord Jesus Christ; it may be, He will put His Blessing, and Healing, and Saving Hands upon them: Then, they are Blessed, and shall be Blessed for evermore! If Abraham cry to God, O that my son Ishmael may live in thy sight! God will say to Abraham, concerning Ishmael, I have heard thee!

Pray for the Salvation of thy Children, and carry the Names of every one of them, every day before the Lord, with Prayers, the Cries whereof shall pierce the very Heavens. Holy Job did so! Job 1:5 He offered according to the number of all his Children; Thus did Job continually.

Address Heaven with daily Prayers, That God would make thy Children the Temples of His Spirit, the Vessels of His Glory; and the Care of His Holy Angels.

Address the Lord Jesus Christ, with Prayers, like them of old, That all the Maladies upon the Souls of thy Children may be cured and that the Evil One may have no possession of them.

Yea, when thou do cast thine Eyes upon the Little Folks, often in a day dart up an Ejaculatory Prayer to Heaven for them; Lord, let this child be thy servant for ever.

If your Prayers are not presently answered, be not Disheartened: Remember the Word of the Lord, in Luke 18:1, That men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

Redouble your Importunity, until thou speed for thy child, as the poor Woman of Canaan did.

Join Fasting to thy Prayer; it may be, the evil in the soul of your child, will not go out, without such a Remedy. David sets himself to Fasting, as well as Prayer, for the Life of his Child. Oh, Do as much for the Soul of thy Child!

Wrestle with the Lord. Receive no Denial. Earnestly protest, Lord, I will not let thee go, except thou Bless this poor Child of mine, and make it thy own! Do this, until, if it may be, thy Heart is Raised by a Touch of Heaven, to a particular Faith; that God has blessed this child, and it shall be Blessed and Saved Forever. But is this all that is to be done? There is more. Parents, Pray with your Children, as well as for them.

Family prayer must be maintained by all those Parents, that would not have their Children miss of Salvation, and that would not have the Damnation of their Children horribly fall upon themselves. Man, thy Family is a Pagan Family, if it be a Prayerless Family: And the Children going down to the place of Dragons from this thy Family, will pour out their Execrations upon thee, in the Bottom of Hell, until the very Heavens be no more.

But, besides your Family Prayers, Oh, parents, why should you not now and then, take one capable Child after another, alone before the Lord? Carry the Child with you, into your Secret Chambers; make the Child kneel down by you, while you present it unto the Lord, and Implore His Blessing upon it.

Let the Child, hear the Groans, and See the Tears, and be a witness of the Agonies, wherewith you are Travailing for the Salvation of it. The Children will never Forget what you do; it will have a marvelous Force upon them.

Thus, Oh, Parents, You have been told, what you have to do, for the Salvation of your Children; and certainly, their Salvation is worth all of this! Your Zeal about the Salvation of your Children, will be a symptom of your own Sincerity. A total want of Zeal, will be a Spot upon you, that is not a Spot of the Children of God.

God will Reward the Zeal. It is very probable, That the Children thus cared for, will be the Saved of the Lord. Your Glad Hearts will one day see it, if they are so: it will augment your Heaven, through all eternity, to have These in Heaven with you. And let it be Remembered, That the Fathers, are not the only Parents obliged thus to pursue the Salvation of their Children: You that are Mothers, have not a little to do for the Souls of your Children, and you have Opportunity to do more than a Little.

Bathsheba the Mother of Solomon, and Eunice the Mother of Timothy, did greatly Contribute unto the Salvation of their famous and worthy Sons.

God has Commanded Children, Forsake not the Law of thy Mother. Then, a Mother must give the Law of God unto them.

It is said of the Virtuous Woman, She looks well to the ways of her Household; Then a Virtuous Mother looks well to the Ways of her Children. Your Children may say, In sin did my Mother Conceive me. Oh, Then let Mothers do what they can, to Save their Children out of Sin! And especially, Mothers, do you Travail for your Children over again, with your Earnest Prayers for their Salvation, until it may be said unto you, as it was unto Monica the Mother of Austin, concerning him; Tis impossible, that thy Child should perish, after thou hast Employed so many Prayers and Tears for the Salvation of it."

Now God give a Good Success to these Poor Endeavours!

04 - The Education of Children

The Education of Children by Cotton Mather An Address Ad Fratres in Eremo

Sirs! A Little Book to assist, The Education of Children, is now in your Hands. But can they be well Educated, if their Parents never send them to SCHOOL? This is a point that seems now to call for some Inculcation. A Good School deserves to be call'd, the very Salt of the Town, that hath it: And the Pastors of every Town are under peculiar obligations to make this a part of their Pastoral Care, That they may have a Good School, in their Neighbourhood. A woeful putrefaction threatens the Rising Generation; Barbarous Ignorance, and the unavoidable consequence of it, Outrageous Wickedness will make the Rising Generation Loathsome, if it have not Schools to preserve it. But Schools, wherein the Youth may by able Masters be Taught the Things that are necessary to qualify them for future Serviceableness, and have their Manners therewithal well-formed under a Laudable Discipline, and be over and above Well-Catechised in the principles of Religion, Those would be a Glory of our Land, and the preservatives of all other Glory. The Minster that shall give his Neighbours No Rest, unto they have agreeable Schools among them, and that shall himself also at some Times inspect and Visit the Schools, will therein do much towards Fulfilling that part of his Ministry, Feed my Lambs; and his Neighbours under his Charge will (whatever they think of it!) have cause to Bless God, for this Expression of his Faithfulness. But these are not the only persons to whom this matter belongs; The Civil Authority, and the whole Vicinity cannot be True to their own Interest, if they do not say, We also will be with thee. When the REFORMATION began in Europe an hundred and fourscore years ago, to Erect Schools everywhere was one principal concern of the Glorious and Heroic Reformers; and it was a common thing even for Little Villages of Twenty or Thirty Families, in the midst of all their Charges, and their Dangers, to maintain one of them. The Colonies of New England were planted on the Design of pursuing that Holy Reformation; and now the Devil cannot give a greater Blow to the Reformation among us, than by causing Schools to Languish under Discouragements.

If our General Courts decline to contrive and provide Laws for the Support of Schools; or if particular Towns Employ their Wits, for Cheats to Elude the wholesome Laws; little do they consider how much they expose themselves to that Rebuke of God, Thou hast destroyed thyself, O New England. Would we Read, in the ancient Histories, how zealous the more discreet Pagans were to maintain Schools among them; it might put us Christians to the Blush, among whom 'tis common for Schools to starve and sink; and a mind sordidly covetous, Withholds more than is meet, but it tends unto what is Infinitely worse than poverty.

Sirs, What will be the Issue of these Things The Issue will be, That, Si Ecclesia desideret pastorem, facilius Impostorem, inveniet quam pastorem; Et Res publica pro Doctore Juris, Juris Tortorem; Et pro medicis, mendici, pro praeceptoribus, Deceptores sese offerent. But least through the Want of Schools, there should in a little while be scarce one man in a place able to construe this Description of the Fate following upon that want, I will transcribe in plain English, the first Article of the Prognostications upon the Future State of New England, lately published:

"Where [Godly] Schools are not vigorously and Honourable Encouraged, whole Colonies will sink apace; into a Degenerate and Contemptible Condition, and at last become horribly Barbarous: And the first Instance of their Barbarity will be, that they will be undone for want of men, but not see and own what it was that undid them." You will therefore pardon my Freedom with you, if I Address you, in the words of Luther:

"If ever there be any Considerable Blow given to the Devil's Kingdom, it must be, by Youth Excellently Educated. It is a serious Thing, a weighty Thing, and a thing that hath much of the Interest of Christ, and of Christianity in it, that Youth be well-trained up, and that Schools, and School-Masters be maintained. Learning is an unwelcome guest to the Devil, and therefore he would fain starve it out." But we shall never long retain the Gospel, without the help of Learning. And if we should have no Regard unto religion, even the outward prosperity of a people, in this World would necessarily require Schools and Learned. Alas, that none are carried with Alacrity and Seriousness to take care for the Education of Youth and to Help the World with Eminent and Able men." But the Freedom with which this Address is made unto you, is not so great as the Fervour that has animated it. My Fathers and Brethren, If you have any Love to God and Christ and Posterity; let [Godly] Schools be more Encouraged.

If you would not betray your Posterity into the very Circumstances of Savages, let Schools have more Encouragement. But in the Anguish, the Despair of Success to be otherwise found by this Address, I will Turn it from you unto the Almighty Hearer of Prayer.

And, O thou Saviour, and Shepherd of Thy New-English Israel: Be Entreated Mercifully to look down upon they Flocks in the Wilderness. Oh, give us not up to the Blindness and Madness of neglecting the Lambs in the Flocks. Inspire thy People, and all Orders of men among thy People with a just care for the Education of Posterity. Let Well-Ordered and well-instructed and well-maintained Schools, be the Honour and the Defence of our Land. Let Learning, and all the Helps and Means of it, be precious in our Esteem and by Learning, let the Interests of thy Gospel so prevail, that we may be made wise unto Salvation. Save us, O our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Save us from the Mischiefs and Scandals of an Uncultivated Offspring; Let this be a Land of Light, unto Thou, O Sun of Righteousness, do Thyself arise unto the World with Healing in thy Wings. Amen.
THE END

05 - A Father's Resolutions

A Father's Resolutions by Cotton Mather

PARENTS, Oh! how much ought you to be continually devising for the good of your children! Often devise how to make them "wise children"; how to give them a desirable education, an education that may render them desirable; how to render them lovely and polite, and serviceable in their generation. Often devise how to enrich their minds with valuable knowledge; how to instill generous, gracious, and heavenly principles into their minds; how to restrain and rescue them from the paths of the destroyer, and fortify them against their peculiar temptations. There is a world of good that you have to do for them. You are without the natural feelings of humanity if you are not in a continual agony to do for them all the good that ever you can. It was no mistake of an ancient writer to say, "Nature teaches us to love our children as ourselves."

RESOLVED— At the birth of my children, I will resolve to do all I can that they may be the Lord's. I will now actually give them up by faith to God; entreating that each child may be a child of God the Father, a subject of God the Son, a temple of God the Spirit—and be rescued from the condition of a child of wrath, and be possessed and employed by the Lord as an everlasting instrument of His glory. As soon as my children are capable of minding my admonitions, I will often, often admonish them, saying, "Child, God has sent His son to die, to save sinners from death and hell. You must not sin against Him. You must every day cry to God that He would be your Father, and your Saviour, and your Leader. You must renounce the service of Satan, you must not follow the vanities of this world, you must lead a life of serious religion.

Let me daily pray for my children with constancy, with fervency, with agony. Yea, by name let me mention each one of them every day before the Lord. I will importunately beg for all suitable blessings to be bestowed upon them: that God would give them grace, and give them glory, and withhold no good thing from them; that God would smile on their education, and give His good angels the charge over them, and keep them from evil, that it may not grieve them; that when their father and mother shall forsake them, the Lord may take them up. With importunity I will plead that promise on their behalf: "The Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him." Oh! happy children, if by asking I may obtain the Holy Spirit for them!

I will early entertain the children with delightful stories out of the Bible. In the talk of the table, I will go through the Bible, when the olive-plants about my table are capable of being so watered. But I will always conclude the stories with some lessons of piety to be inferred from them.

I will single out some Scriptural sentences of the greatest importance; and some also that have special antidotes in them against the common errors and vices of children. They shall quickly get those golden sayings by heart, and be rewarded with silver or gold, or some good thing, when they do it. Such as, Psalm 11:10—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Matthew 16:26—"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

1 Timothy 1:15—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

Matthew 6:6—"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."

Ephesians 4:25—"Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour."

Romans 12:17, Romans 12:19—"Recompense to no man evil for evil . . . Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves."

Jewish treatise tells us that among the Jews, when a child began to speak, the father was bound to teach him Deuteronomy 33:4—"Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." Oh! let me early make my children acquainted with the Law which our blessed Jesus has commanded us! 'Tis the best inheritance I can give them.

I will cause my children to learn the Catechism. In catechizing them, I will break the answers into many lesser and proper questions; and by their answer to them, observe and quicken their understandings. I will bring every truth into some duty and practice, and expect them to confess it, and consent unto it, and resolve upon it. As we go on in our catechizing, they shall, when they are able, turn to the proofs and read them, and say to me what they prove and how. Then, I will take my times, to put nicer and harder questions to them; and improve the times of conversation with my family (which every man ordinarily has or may have) for conferences on matters of religion.

Restless will I be till I may be able to say of my children, "Behold, they pray!" I will therefore teach them to pray. But after they have learnt a form of prayer, I will press them to proceed unto points that are not in their form. I will charge them with all possible cogency to pray in secret; and often call upon them, "Child, I hope, you don't forget my charge to you, about secret prayer: your crime is very great if you do!"

I will do what I can very early to beget a temper of kindness in my children, both toward one another and toward all other people. I will instruct them how ready they should be to share with others a part of what they have; and they shall see my encouragements when they discover a loving, a courteous, an helpful disposition. I will give them now and then a piece of money, so that with their own little hands they may dispense unto the poor. Yea, if any one has hurt them, or vexed them, I will not only forbid them all revenge, but also oblige them to do a kindness as soon as may be to the vexatious person. All coarseness of language or carriage in them, I will discountenance.

I will be solicitous to have my children expert, not only at reading handsomely, but also at writing a fair hand. I will then assign them such books to read as I may judge most agreeable and profitable; obliging them to give me some account of what they read; but keep a strict eye upon them, that they don't stumble on the Devil's library, and poison themselves with foolish romances, or novels, or plays, or songs, or jests that are not convenient. I will set them also, to write out such things as may be of the greatest benefit unto them; and they shall have their blank books, neatly kept on purpose, to enter such passages as I advise them to. I will particularly require them now and then to write a prayer of their own composing, and bring it unto me; that so I may discern what sense they have of their own everlasting interests.

I wish that my children may as soon as may be, feel the principles of reason and honor working in them—and that I may carry on their education, very much upon those principles. Therefore, first, I will wholly avoid that harsh, fierce, crabbed usage of the children that would make them tremble and abhor to come into my presence. I will treat them so that they shall fear to offend me, and yet mightily love to see me, and be glad of my coming home if I have been abroad at any time. I will have it looked upon as a severe and awful punishment to be forbidden for awhile to come into my presence. I will raise in them an high opinion of their father's love to them, and of his being better able to judge what is good for them than they are for themselves. I will bring them to believe 'tis best for them to be and do as I will have them. Hereupon I will continually magnify the matter to them, what a brave thing 'tis to know the things that are excellent; and more brave to do the things that are virtuous. I will have them to propose it as a reward of their well-doing at any time, I will now go to my father, and he will teach me something that I was never taught before. I will have them afraid of doing any base thing, from an horror of the baseness in it. My first response to finding a lesser fault in them shall be a surprise, a wonder, vehemently expressed before them, that ever they should be guilty of doing so foolishly; a vehement belief that they will never do the like again; a weeping resolution in them, that they will not. I will never dispense a blow, except it be for an atrocious crime or for a lesser fault obstinately persisted in; either for an enormity, or for an obstinacy. I will always proportion the chastisements to the miscarriages; neither smiting bitterly for a very small piece of childishness nor frowning only a little for some real wickedness. Nor shall my chastisement ever be dispensed in a passion and a fury; but I will first show them the command of God, by transgressing whereof they have displeased me. The slavish, raving, fighting way of discipline is too commonly used. I look upon it as a considerable article in the wrath and curse of God upon a miserable world. As soon as we can, we'll get up to yet higher principles. I will often tell the children what cause they have to love a glorious Christ, who has died for them. And how much He will be well-pleased with their well-doing. And what a noble thing 'tis to follow His example; which example I will describe unto them. I will often tell them that the eye of God is upon them; the great God knows all they do and hears all they speak. I will often tell them that there will be a time when they must appear before the Judgment-Seat of the holy Lord; and they must now do nothing that may then be a grief and shame unto them. I will set before them the delights of that Heaven that is prepared for pious children; and the torments of that Hell that is prepared of old for naughty ones. I will inform them of the good things the good angels do for little ones that have the fear of God and are afraid of sin. And how the devils tempt them to do ill things; how they hearken to the devils, and are like them, when they do such things; and what mischiefs the devils may get leave to do them in this world, and what a sad thing 'twill be, to be among the devils in the Place of Dragons. I will cry to God, that He will make them feel the power of these principles. When the children are of a fit age for it, I will sometimes closet them; have them with me alone; talk with them about the state of their souls; their experiences, their proficiencies, their temptations; obtain their declared consent unto every jot and tittle of the gospel; and then pray with them, and weep unto the Lord for His grace, to be bestowed upon them, and make them witnesses of the agony with which I am travailing to see the image of Christ formed in them. Certainly, they'll never forget such actions!

I will be very watchful and cautious about the companions of my children. I will be very inquisitive what company they keep; if they are in hazard of being ensnared by any vicious company, I will earnestly pull them out of it, as brands out of the burning. I will find out, and procure, laudable

companions for them. As in catechizing the children, so in the repetition of the public sermons, I will use this method. I will put every truth into a question to be answered with Yes or No. By this method I hope to awaken their attention as well as enlighten their understanding. And thus I shall have an opportunity to ask, "Do you desire such or such a grace of God?" and the like. Yea, I may have opportunity to demand, and perhaps to obtain their early and frequent (and why not sincere?) consent unto the glorious gospel. The Spirit of Grace may fall upon them in this action; and they may be seized by Him, and held as His temples, through eternal ages. When a Day of Humiliation arrives, I will make them know the meaning of the day. And after time given them to consider of it, I will order them to tell me what special afflictions they have met with, and what good they hope to get by those afflictions. On a Day of Thanksgiving, they shall also be made to know the intent of the Day. And after consideration, they shall tell me what mercies of God unto them they take special notice of, and what duties to God they confess and resolve under such obligations. Indeed, for something of this importance, to be pursued in my conversation with the children, I will not confine myself unto the solemn days, which may occur too seldom for it. Very particularly, on the birthdays of the children, I will take them aside, and mind them of the age which (by God's grace) they are come unto; how thankful they should be for the mercies of God which they have hitherto lived upon; how fruitful they should be in all goodness, that so they may still enjoy their mercies. And I will inquire of them whether they have ever yet begun to mind the work which God sent them into the world upon; how far they understand the work; and what good strokes they have struck at it; and, how they design to spend the rest of their time, if God still continue them in the world. When the children are in any trouble—if they be sick, or pained—I will take advantage therefrom, to set before them the evil of sin, which brings all our trouble; and how fearful a thing it will be to be cast among the damned, who are in ceaseless and endless trouble. I will set before them the benefit of an interest in a CHRIST, by which their trouble will be sanctified unto them, and they will be prepared for death, and for fullness of joy in a happy eternity after death.

Among all the points of education which I will endeavor for my children, I hope to see that each of them—the daughters as well as the sons—may gain insight into some skill that lies in the way of gain (however their own inclination may most carry them), so that they may be able to subsist themselves, and get something of a livelihood, in case the Providence of God should bring them into necessities. Why not they as well as Paul the Tent-Maker! The children of the best fashion, may have occasion to bless the parents that make such a provision for them! The Jews have a saying worth remembering: "Whoever doesn't teach his son some trade or business, teaches him to be a thief." As soon as ever I can, I will make my children apprehensive of the main end for which they are to live; that so they may as soon as may be, begin to live; and their youth not be nothing but vanity. I will show them, that their main end must be, to, acknowledge the great God, and His glorious Christ; and bring others to acknowledge Him: and that they are never wise nor well, but when they are doing so. I will make them able to answer the grand question of why they live; and what is the end of the actions that fill their lives? I will teach them that their Creator and Redeemer is to be obeyed in everything, and everything is to be done in obedience to Him. I will teach them how even their diversions, and their ornaments, and the tasks of their education, must all be to fit them for the further service of Him to whom I have devoted them; and how in these also, His commandments must be the rule of all they do. I will sometimes therefore surprise them with an inquiry, "Child, what is this for? Give me a good account of why you do it?" How comfortably shall I see them walking in the light, if I may bring them wisely to answer this inquiry.

I will oblige the children to retire sometimes, and ponder on that question: "What shall I wish to have done, if I were now a-dying?"—and report unto me their own answer to the question; of which I will then take advantage, to inculcate the lessons of godliness upon them.

If I live to see the children marriageable, I will, before I consult with Heaven and earth for their best accommodation in the married state, endeavor the espousal of their souls unto their only Saviour. I will as plainly, and as fully as I can, propose unto them the terms on which the glorious Redeemer would espouse them to Himself, in righteousness, judgment, and favor and mercies forever; and solicit their consent unto His proposals and overtures. Then would I go on, to do what may be expected from a tender parent for them, in their temporal circumstances."

—Cotton Mather

06 - The Last Days of Increase Mather

The Last Days of Increase Mather by Cotton Mather (From "Memoirs of Remarkables in the Life and the Death of the Ever-Memorable Dr. Increase Mather."—1724)

ND now the time draws nigh, in which Dr. Mather is to die. He grows old, yet what a green olive-tree in the proseucha of his God!—*nec tarda senectus debilitat vires animi, mulaive vigorem.*

Old age came on. But what an one! How bright! How wise! How strong! And in what an uncommon measure serviceable! He had been an old man while he was yet a young man; I can quote a Rabbi for it:

Sapiens appellatur senex, etiamsi diebus sit exiguus. And now he was an old man his public performances had a vigor in them, which 'tis a rare thing to see a young man have any thing equal to.

How did the good people far and near discover even a growth of their appetite for the enjoyment of as much as might be obtained from him! The churches would not permit an ordination to be carried on without him as long as he was able to travel in a coach unto them.

Though in the prefaces of the useful books which he now published he repeated an ungrantable request unto his friends, "no longer to pray for his life," they only prayed the more for it. When he had finished forty-nine years of his public ministry he preached a sermon full of rare and rich thoughts upon "A Jubilee;" and he requested for a dismissal from any further public labors. His flock prized them too much to hear of that; but anon, when they saw the proper time for it, that they might render his old age as easy as might be to him, they wisely and kindly voted it, "That the labors of the pulpit should be expected from him only when he should find himself able and inclined for them." It would be no strange thing if while he wanted yet some years to reach fourscore there should be found some little thing that might carry something of senile weakness in it. But he held it unto fourscore in a wonderful exercise of his intellectual powers, and with public ministrations to very great congregations which his ministry continued still to give the greatest satisfaction to. A treatise which he published about this time, concerning "An Hoary Head found in the Way of Righteousness," notably described what he was himself, and as notably declared, what he was yet able to do. He continued preaching to vast assemblies; and such well composed sermons that the notes taken by some ready writers after him, when communicated unto the public by the way of the press, found their acceptance in the churches. Among which ready writers we owe our particular thanks to a virtuous gentlewoman, whose exquisite pen helped several of his treatises into the world; in some sort as the excellent Lady Rich did the most valuable and admirable books of Mr. Strong on "The Covenant." Yea, and even after fourscore the old prophetic strain had not forsaken him. In September, 1720, he preached an awful sermon (from Amos 3:7,) on this doctrine: "When God has an holy purpose to visit his people with great judgments, He uses to give them notice and warning of it beforehand." In the conclusion he expressly fortold; first, "That an heavy judgment was impending over Boston, that would speedily be executed." And then,

"That the churches of the country were near to some shocking dispensations." He added: "My brethren, I take no pleasure in testifying unto you of evil days. But when the Word of the Lord is like a fire in a man's bones, there must be something said that may awaken you out of your security." Now within a few months after this the small-pox was brought into Boston, and within as few months more the besom of destruction swept away near a thousand people. And how strangely was way made for the Destroying Angel to do his execution! But let me not anticipate. I am saying that until fourscore the Doctor held it unto admiration! And on the day of his attaining to fourscore he preached a sermon full of light and life on those words, Ezekiel 16:5, "The day when thou wast born." They that wrote after him have printed it. The mens et ratio et consilium which are by Cicero mentioned as the prerogatives of "Old Age," were found in him to an uncommon degree. On very many accounts he might have said, as old Georgias did, Nihil habeo propter quod senectutem meam accusem; yea, as a better man, old Drusius did, Senectus mihi melior quam ipsa juvenus. But that which most of all gave him a comfortable old age, was what Calvin, who did not live to old age, well pitches on as the chiefest comfort of old age: Tenendum est, proecipuam partem bonae senectutis, in bona conscientia animoque; sereno ac tranquillo consistere. A good heart, filled with the love and peace of God and the soul of an Abraham. In consideration of this eugaria it was not amiss for a grandson, upon the birthday on which he entered fourscore, thus to compliment him. To my most honoured Grandfather, on the day of his entering the eightieth year of his age. To my Grandfather in all good so great, His nephew does his age congratulate.

'Tis not enough, Syr, that you live to see Such years; we hope you'll our true Nestor be.

We wish the years in which you live and preach, To those of a Methuselah may reach.

'Tis true, in common reckoning we suppose You want eight hundred eighty-six of those, But measuring life, by works and not by years, Your age nine hundred sixty-nine appears.

Methuselah had a bright father too; A "walker with his God;" Syr, such as you.

If you and we must have a parting day, Death, strike not!—Let him go in Enoch's way. And Syr, if prophets mayn't forever live, May you in Grandsons left by you survive. But it is now time for me to tell that after fourscore the report of Moses did no longer want confirmation with him. He began to be more sensible of those decays which not only caused him to recite the verse of the Roman satirist:

O quam continuis, et quantis plena senectus longa malis!— but also caused him several times to say to me: "Be sure, you don't pray that you may live beyond fourscore!" Yet now he preached nobly on "An Old Disciple;" as well as many other subjects. And now, he that had wished for "sufferings for the Lord," must be content with sufferings from the Lord. Even these borne with the faith and patience of the saints have a sort of martyrdom in them, and will add unto the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." On September 25th, he did with an excellent and pathetic prayer, in a mighty auditory, conclude a "day of prayer" kept by his church, to obtain a good success of the Gospel and the growth of real and vital piety, with plentiful effusions of the good Spirit, especially upon the "Rising Generation." Within two days after this he fell into an apoplectic sort of deliquium (very much occasioned, as it was thought, by too extreme a concern of his mind on some late occurrences at New Haven), out of which he recovered in a few minutes; but it so enfeebled him, that he never went abroad any more.

However, his "wisdom yet remained with him." THE END

07 - The Devil in New England

The Devil in New England by Cotton Mather (From The Wonders of The Invisible World—1692)

THE New-Englanders are a people of God settled in those, which were once the Devil's territories; and it may easily be supposed that the Devil was exceedingly disturbed, when he perceived such a People here accomplishing the Promise of old made unto our Blessed Jesus, That he should have the Utmost parts of the Earth for His Possession. There was not a greater Uproar among the Ephesians, when the Gospel was first brought among them, than there was among, The Powers of the Air (after whom those Ephesians walked) when first the Silver Trumpets of the Gospel here made the Joyful Sound. The Devil thus Irritated, immediately try'd all sorts of Methods to overturn this poor Plantation: and so much of the Church, as was Fled into this Wilderness, immediately found, The Serpent cast out of his Mouth a Flood for the carrying of it away. I believe, that never were more Satanical Devices used for the Unsettling of any People under the Sun, than what have been Employ'd for the Extirpation of the Vine which God has here Planted, Casting out the Heathen, and preparing a Room for it, and causing it to take deep Root and fill the Land, so that it sent its Boughs unto the Atlantic Sea Eastward, and its Branches unto the Connecticut River Westward, and the Hills were covered with the shadow thereof. But All those Attempts of Hell, have hitherto been Abortive, many an Ebenezer has been Erected unto the Praise of God, by his Poor People here; and, Having obtained Help from God, we continue to this Day. Wherefore the Devil is now making one Attempt more upon us; an Attempt more Difficult, more Surprizing, more snarl'd with unintelligible Circumstances than any that we have hitherto Encountered; an Attempt so Critical, that if we get well through, we shall soon enjoy Halcyon Days with all the Vultures of hell Trodden under our Feet. He has wanted his Incarnate Legions to Persecute us, as the People of God have in the other Hemisphere been Persecuted: he has therefore drawn forth his more Spiritual ones to make an Attacque upon us. We have been advised by some Credible Christians yet alive, that a Malefactor, accused of Witchcraft as well as Murder, and Executed in this place more than Forty Years ago, did then give Notice of, An Horrible PLOT against the Country by WITCHCRAFT, and a Foundation of WITCHCRAFT then laid, which if it were not seasonably discovered would probably Blow up, and pull down all the Churches in the Country. And we have now with Horror seen the Discovery of such a Witchcraft! An Army of Devils is horribly broke in upon the place which is the Center, and after a sort, the First-born of our English Settlements; and the Houses of the Good People there are fill'd with the doleful Shrieks of their Children and Servants, Tormented by Invisible Hands, with Tortures altogether preternatural. After the Mischiefs there Endeavoured, and since in part Conquered, the terrible Plague, of Evil Angels, hath made its Progress into some other places, where other Persons have been in like manner Diabolically handled. These our poor Afflicted Neighbours, quickly after they become Infected and Infested with these Daemons, arrive to a Capacity of Discerning those which they conceive the Shapes of their Troublers; and notwithstanding the Great and Just Suspicion, that the Daemons might Impose the Shapes of Innocent Persons in their Spectral Exhibitions upon the Sufferers (which may perhaps prove no small part of the Witch-plot in the issue), yet many of the Persons thus

Represented being Examined, several of them have been Convicted of a very Damnable Witchcraft: yea, more than one Twenty have Confessed that they have Signed unto a Book, which the Devil show'd them, and Engaged in his Hellish Design of Bewitching, and Ruining our Land. We know not, at least I know not, how far the Delusions of Satan may be Interwoven into some Circumstances of the Confessions; but one would think, all the Rules of Understanding Humane Affairs are at an end, if after so many most Voluntary Harmonious Confessions, made by Intelligent Persons of all Ages, in sundry Towns, at several Times, we must not Believe the main strokes wherein those Confessions all agree: especially when we have a thousand preternatural Things every day before our eyes, wherein the Confessors do acknowledge their Concernment, and give Demonstration of their being so Concerned. If the Devils now can strike the minds of men with any Poisons of so fine a Composition and Operation, that Scores of Innocent People shall Unite, in Confessions of a Crime, which we see actually committed, it is a thing prodigious, beyond the Wonders of the former Ages, and it threatens no less than a sort of Dissolution upon the World. Now, by these Confessions 'tis Agreed, That the Devil has made a dreadful Knot of Witches in the Country, and by the help of Witches has dreadfully increased that Knot: That these Witches have driven a Trade of Commissioning their Confederate Spirits, to do all sorts of Mischiefs to the Neighbours, whereupon there have ensued such Mischievous consequences upon the Bodies and Estates of the Neighbourhood, as could not otherwise be accounted for: yea, That at prodigious Witch-meetings, the Wretches have proceeded so far, as to Concert and Consult the Methods of Rooting out the Christian Religion from this Country, and setting up instead of it, perhaps a more gross Diabolism, than ever the World saw before. And yet it will be a thing little short of Miracle, if in so spread a Business as this, the Devil should not get in some of his Juggles, to confound the Discovery of all the rest.

08 - Satisfaction in God

Satisfaction in God by Cotton Mather Our continual apprehension of God, may produce our continual satisfaction in God, under all His dispensations. Whatever enjoyments are by God conferred upon us, where lies the relish, where the sweetness of them? Truly, we may come to relish our enjoyments, only so far as we have something of God in them. It was required in Psal. xxxvii. 4, "Delight thyself in the Lord." Yea, and what if we should have no delight but the Lord? Let us ponder with ourselves over our enjoyments: "In these enjoyments I see God, and by these enjoyments, I serve God!" And now, let all our delight in, and all our value and fondness for our enjoyments, be only, or mainly, upon such a divine score as this. As far as any of our enjoyments lead us unto God, so far let us relish it, affect it, embrace it, and rejoice in it: "O taste, and feed upon God in all;" and ask for nothing, no, not for life itself, any further than as it may help us, in our seeing and our serving of our God. And then, whatever afflictions do lay fetters upon us, let us not only remember that we are concerned with God therein, but let our concernment with God procure a very profound submission in our souls. Be able to say with him in Psalms 39:9, "I open not my mouth, because thou didst it." In all our afflictions, let us remark the justice of that God, before whom, "why should a living man complain for the punishment of his sin?" The wisdom of that God, "whose judgments are right:" the goodness of that God, who "punishes us less than our iniquities do deserve." Let us behave ourselves, as having to do with none but God in our afflictions: And let our afflictions make us more conformable unto God: which conformity being effected, let us then say, "'Tis good for me that I have been afflicted."

Sirs, what were this, but a pitch of holiness, almost angelical! Oh! Mount up, as with the wings of eagles, of angels: be not a sorry, puny, mechanick sort of Christians any longer; but reach forth unto these things that are thus before you.

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