

## Handout

# *Advice From 400 Years Ago*

## The Office of Christian Parents

The office of Christian parents. [Cambridge]:

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## Ordering of sonnes from fourteene yeare old and upward

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... one thing commeth to my minde, which I have singled out, because I see much mischeife commeth thereupon: which is a kinde of childish braverie, whereupon many doe stand in this our age, and so upward: and these be the words of our young bloods; I will offer no man wrong or disgrace, but if any be offered to me I will not put it up: I will not take wrong at any mans hand. This they take to be the honour and reputation of a man, and namely of a gentleman, that the least touch or word, which seemeth to carrie any disgrace, they be readie to stab, or to challenge into the field. And if through anger one chance to say, thou liest; or touch his cheeke with the backe of his hands; this is taken in such scorne, that there is no way of pacification or reconciliation, but by the sacrifice of death, either one or both must die, or at the least they hazard their lives in a wicked combate. So little is the price of a mans life in our daies, and so great is the pride and wrath of vaine and foolish men; so that many a brave gentleman is cast away without cause and unnecessarily. *Vulgur animos a miratur etc.* The common people (saith Seneca) admire courageous gentlemen, and they that are old are honoured, but quiet men are counted cowards. This is so perhaps at the first fight, yet when an equall life doth make them discerne and believe, this is is not the cowardlinesse..

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....To whom I answer; he is a slave which is intrhalled into his owne anger; but gentlemen are called, *gens d'armes*, men that beare armes and therefore let them read the historie of Julius Cesar in his Commentaries, and they shall finde, that he being a man of armes, and very valiant, would not always fight when he was provoked, no though his souldiers called him coward, but when it might be most safe for him and his army, amd most honourable in the issue: so if our gentlemen would consider when they ought to fight, what indeed belongeth to their honour, and what a lamentable issue commeth of such rash, venturous and beastly fighting, there would not be one of five hundred to mourne for the casting away of their sonne, or of their friend. I remember I have heard it reported among wise men, that in the Court in Queene Elizabeths time, of blessed memory, there was a sober staid gentleman a Courtier, who went in and out as his place required with his sword by his side, but he medled with no man, and gave no occasion of brawle: on a time a couple of lustie bloods would needs trie if he were not a coward, and set upon him with their swords drawn; when he saw there was no remedy, he drew upon them, shewed the valour of a quiet man, driving them both before him like a couple of sheepe: so if Parents would instruct their children to quiet meekness, and to abstaine from quarrels, and quarrelling company; and underhand arme them with skill & courage to defend themselves.