

THE BLUE BANNER

Volume 10, Issue 3

For Christ's Crown & Covenant

July/September 2001

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In this Issue.

James Durham on the Second Commandment, Part 2 of 2.  **Book Reviews by Dr. W. Gary Crampton**  *Keeping a Father's Commandment, by Richard Bacon*

by Christopher Coldwell

 As this issue goes to press Pastor Bacon is preparing for his August month long trip to Myanmar (Burma), where he will be teaching in the Myanmar Presbyterian Community Church theological school, as well as visiting that denomination's churches. We hope to have a report (D.V.) on Dr. Bacon's trip in the fourth quarter issue. The Lord has given FPCR a unique opportunity to minister to Christians in Myanmar via teaching, translation of good reformed publications, and a possible new Bible translation for the Chin people. Please be in prayer for Dr. Bacon and FPCR as we undertake this ministry.

This issue concludes with part two of an article on the second commandment begun last issue, written by James Durham (1622-1658), a Presbyterian minister in the Church of Scotland during Second Reformation times. His books were popular for several centuries after his death, and are being rediscovered again as new editions are published. He was a painstaking preacher, *a prince among spiritual expositors* according to Charles Spurgeon, who also noted: "Whatever Durham has written is very precious." For a brief ministry he has left a commendable body of work, including: Exposition of the Ten Commandments, Lectures on Job, Commentaries on Revelation and Song of Solomon, Sermons on Isaiah 53, A Treatise Concerning Scandal, Sermons on Death, and other sermon collections. This writer has edited new manuscripts, and published some via Naphtali Press, of all but the work on Revelation, Song, and the other sermon collections. While not an easy author to read, it can be seconded, that Durham was a spiritual expositor of the highest order, as we trust is evidenced by this exposition on the second commandment.

Rounding out this issue are reviews by Dr. Gary Crampton of two books written by Gordon Clark and a sermon by Dr. Bacon from his Domestic Duties series, *Keeping a Father's Commandments*, which we hope our readers will find useful and edifying.

The Second Commandment.

Part Two of Two. This extract comes from: James Durham, *A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (Dallas, TX: Naphtali Press, 2000), unpublished E-book. Copyright © 2001 by Chris Coldwell.

By James Durham



e shall proceed in the *next* place, [D] to consider the sins that wait on receiving the sacraments; which, as they were a special part of the worship of God under the Old Testament, so they are yet under the New; and our sins, in reference to them, strike against this command, as it prescribes and carves out our external worship. And so much the rather should we consider this, because there cannot be a more express covenanting with God in giving and receiving, proposing terms and accepting of them for closing the covenant, than is in the sacraments.

Before we enter to speak of the faults we are guilty of, we may in general propose some things concerning the sacraments. As 1. For what ends God has appointed them, that so we may know what is to be expected in them. 2. How they effectuate the ends that we may know how we should go about them. And we shall speak to these two jointly, because we cannot speak to the one, but we must speak to the other.

But, before we speak to these, some things are to be permitted. As 1. That God has thought good always to add sacraments to his covenants. Thus the covenant of works had its sacraments; Adam had the tree of life for a sacrament to confirm him in the faith of that covenant. So the covenant of grace, in all its administrations, had its sacraments also for confirmation thereof; as, before Christ's incarnation, it had circumcision, the Passover, and diverse sacrifices effectual for that end; and the fathers, before Abraham, had their sacrifices for sacraments; and, since his incarnation, it has baptism and the Lord's supper. For as the Lord has for man's sake condescended to deal with him after the manner of men, by covenants and mutual engagements,

so he keeps the manner of men, in swearing, sealing and confirming these covenants, for their greater consolation who are within the same (Heb. 6:18).

2. Although the nature of the covenant alter the sacrament in respect of our use-making of it; yet, as all covenants have some essentials in which they agree, to wit, a promise, and a restitution; so all sacraments have something common, to wit, that they signify, seal, and strengthen the covenanters in assurance of enjoying what is promised, according to the terms of the covenant, to which they are as seals appended. The tree of life confirmed the promise of life to Adam, upon condition of perfect obedience; circumcision confirmed it to Abraham, upon condition of faith (Rom. 4:11).

3. The sacraments of the covenant of grace, before and after Christ, differ in circumstantials, as the covenant itself under the Old and New Testament does; but in essentials they agree, for they seal one and the same thing, and after one and the same manner.

4. There are some chief things common to all sacraments of the covenant under one administration. As for example, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, agree both in this, that they seal the covenant, and represent Christ and his benefits, etc. Yet in either of them there are some peculiar promises and benefits especially looked unto; and also they have their peculiar manner of sealing these things, which are common to both. Believers are also confirmed in the same things by the word; but the sacraments confirm them in another way, more clearly and sensibly, and proportionally to our weakness and necessity.

5. No sacrament is of and from itself valid, but its validity and efficacy is from the covenant and promise whereof it is a sacrament; and so it is a seal to none but to such as are in the covenant, and keep the condition of it. To them it seals the benefits promised, though absolutely and simply it seals the truth of the conditional promises; and so it may be said conditionally to seal, to all the members of the church, the truth of what is promised upon such a condition. As for example, the tree of life sealed this truth, that [those] who stood in perfect obedience should have life; but it did not seal to Adam, that he should have life, except upon condition of his perfect obedience. The like may be said of circumcision, baptism, etc.

6. Hence every sacrament supposes a covenant, and the receiver's entry into the covenant, to which the sacrament that he receives relates. So that we come not to the sacrament properly to enter into covenant with God; but first the covenant is entered, and then the seal is added, as [in] Gen. 17, first God entered into a covenant with Abraham, and then the seal of circumcision is added as a confirmation thereof.

7. No sacrament gives any new right which the receiver had not before; only it confirms the right he had before. He has access to the sacraments upon the account of his external right.

8. Sacraments confirm still something that is future, and to come, they being instituted for the confirmation of our faith and hope in those things of which we are most apt to doubt; as the Passover strengthened the Israelites against the fear of being destroyed; the tree of life confirmed what was promised to Adam, and not performed. And so all sacraments help us to believe the making good of some promise not performed; for they serve as the oath and seal. And indeed, when we preach the gospel, we offer a sealed covenant, and a sworn covenant.

These things being premised, we come to speak to the things proposed. And we say, the sacraments of the New Testament (of which only we speak purposely) have in God's appointment, and our use, these three ends especially:

The *first* is to represent clearly the nature of the covenant, and the things promised therein; as the washing away of sin, Christ himself, his death and benefits, and the way how we come to the application of all these, to wit, by faith freely, putting on Jesus Christ for taking away guilt, and strengthening us to a holy walk. In all these the sacraments (that is, the signs and word of institution added) do fully and clearly 1. to the ears, 2. to the eyes, 3. to our other senses of feeling, etc, not only hold forth what is offered, but our way of closing with, and accepting of that offer; as if God, who by preaching lets us hear him speak (inviting us to be reconciled to him) were, in the sacraments, letting us see him tryst and close that bargain with us by his ambassadors; in which respect, the sacrament may be called the symbol and token of the covenant, as it is, Gen. 17. And this way the sacraments have a teaching use, to bring to our remembrance Christ, his sufferings and benefits, as well as our estate, what it was without him, and before our closing with him. All this, by the word and elements, with the actions concurring, is represented to us, as if it were acted before our eyes, for making the way of the gospel the more clear to our judgments and memories, who either senselessly take it up, or sluggishly forget these spiritual things. The Lord, who sometimes makes use of parables and figurative expressions or similitudes, to set forth spiritual things, to make them take with us the more, has chosen this way to make use of external signs and actions for the same ends also.

The *second* end of sacraments is to seal and confirm God's mind and revealed will to man, and to put him out of question of the truth of his promises, that so he may have a further prop to his faith, and may draw more strong consolation from the promises of the covenant upon this ground. In this respect they are called *seals of the righteousness by faith* (Rom. 4:11); that is, not the righteousness of Abraham's faith, but of his obtaining righteousness by IT, and not by works; that is, they are seals of that covenant which offers and promises righteousness to such as believe. So was the tree of life a confirmation to Adam of the promise of life; so was

circumcision to Abraham a seal and confirmation of the promises of the gospel, as God's oath was (Heb. 6:18), and so are the sacraments to us.

This confirmation may be three ways looked on. 1. As that which confirms the proposition. 2. The assumption. 3. The conclusion of a practical syllogism, whereby the believer concludes from the gospel that he shall be saved.

The proposition is this: *He that believeth shall be saved.* This by the sacrament is simply confirmed, as a truth that one may lean unto. Then the believer's conscience, in the faith of that, subsumes, 'I will then take me by faith to Christ, seeing that is a sure truth, I will rest on him and hold me there;' or more clearly, 'I do believe in him.'

Now 2. This assumption, That I, or such a man have faith, is not confirmed simply by the seal; for the sacrament is to be externally applied by men, who can say no more but they charitably judge such a one to have faith. Yet it may be said to be so far confirmed, as one, whose faith doubts, may by this be encouraged to rest on Christ, and quiet himself on him. Thus faith is confirmed, while it is helped to assume, though the man be not clear that he has assumed. As also, one having according to God's command cast himself on Christ, and, according to his institution taken the seal; I say, such a man may conclude from the seal, as well as from the promise, that he is accepted; even as one having prayed may conclude he has been heard, having done it according to God's will in the name of Christ.

3. When the conclusion is drawn, *Therefore I shall be saved,* the sacrament does not confirm that simply to us, more than it did to Adam (who afterward broke the covenant of works, and so attained not the thing promised); but it seals it conditionally, *If thou believe, thou shalt be saved.* And so the assumption must be made out by the search of the conscience, before the conclusion receive any confirmation by the sacrament. Yet by strengthening the *major proposition*, *Such as believe shall be saved;* it strengthens the *conclusion* also. For if that were not true, my having faith, or fleeing to Christ, were no great

comfort; and so consequently it has influence on the believer's comfort in the *conclusion*, as God's oath and seal did confirm the promise made to Abraham, and also strengthened his faith in believing it should be made out to him (Rom. 4:11).

Again, it is to be considered that the sacrament seals particularly, not only as it says, *All that believe shall be saved;* but also, it says, *Thou, if thou wilt believe, shalt be saved.* And the seal is so appended to that conditional offer, that the covenant stands not only sure in general to all believers, but to me particularly upon my closing with it, as if God were particularly singling me out to make the offer unto me, and to take my engagement, and to put the seal in my hand, by which faith is more particularly helped and strengthened than by the word alone. There is great use therefore of the sacraments, in that thereby we get faith quieted in the believing of this, that God will lay by his controversy and keep his covenant, and make forthcoming his promises to those who flee for refuge to Jesus Christ, according to his oath and seal. Thus he seals the *major* simply; the *minor* conditionally, but particularly. Or we may suppose God speaking to us from the covenant thus, 'He to whom I offer Christ, he may receive him; and all that believe, and receive the offer, shall obtain the blessing offered.' 'But I offer Christ to thee; therefore thou mayst and shouldst receive him; and, if thou accept the offer, thou shalt obtain the blessing offered, and shalt be saved.' Thus the *major* and *minor* are simply sealed, but the *conclusion* conditionally. Or the sacrament seals the offer simply but the promise as it is applied to such a particular person conditionally, if he receive the offer; so that none needs to question God's offer, nor Christ's performance, on our acceptance. And thus the sacraments may be called *testimonies* of God's grace to us, because particularly they seal that offer of his grace unto us, namely, *Christ*, and *salvation* by him, and his being content to give him upon condition of our believing.

The *third* end and use of the sacrament is to exhibit and apply Christ or his benefits to believers. Hence in the sacraments we put on

Christ, and eat him; which is not done by any physical union of Christ or his benefits with the signs; but as, in the word, Christ communicates himself, when the Spirit goes along with the promises, and hearers bring not only their ears, but their hearts and faith to that ordinance, so here, by the sacraments Christ is communicated to us, when we come not only with ears, eyes, taste, etc. but with faith exercised on Christ in the sacrament, with respect to his institution; and he comes by his Spirit with the elements and word; whereby the union with Christ is so much the more near and sensible, as it has upon the one side so many and great external helps in the means appointed by God, and on the other side a proportional blessing promised to go along with his ordinance by the operation of his Spirit. Hence it is that all this communion is spiritual, conferred by the Spirit, and received by faith; yet it is most real, and having a real ground and cause, and real effects following; not by virtue of the sacraments in themselves, more than by the word or prayer considered in themselves; but by the virtue of the promises being laid hold on by faith. And now, word and sacraments being joined together, they concur the more effectually for bringing forth those ends intended in the covenant.

There is a *fourth* end that results from these, and that is, a *believer's consolation* (Heb. 1:6, 8) which by the strengthening of faith, and beholding of Christ in that ordinance, and being confirmed in the hope of his coming again, proves very sweet, and corroborates the soul so much the more, as that therein he trusts often with the believer, and by it communicates himself to his senses and spiritual feeling.

Fifthly, the sacraments holds forth a mutual engaging betwixt God and his people. God holds out the contract, the covenant and offer; we, by our partaking, do declare our acceptance of that offer on those terms, and engage accordingly, that we shall make use of that righteousness therein held forth for our justification, and of that wisdom and strength therein offered for our direction and sanctification. In this respect, our taking of the seal is called our *covenanting*; and (Gen. 17) he was to be punished that wanted

[*lacked*] the seal of God's covenant. Thus our accepting and receiving, looks to the word, holding forth the terms; and God seals and confirms on these terms, the particular promises of righteousness and strength to the ends before mentioned, that our faith may be strengthened in making use of them.

These are the main and principal ends of the sacraments, though they serve also for outward distinguishing of God's people from all other societies and persons.

In sum, the word offers Christ and his benefits; the hearer accepts him on the terms on which he is offered, and consents. Both these are supposed to precede the sacraments; though (as we may see in the jailor, Acts 16, and others) it may be but for a very short time, yet in the order of nature at least, they are *prior*. And then come the sacraments, which have in them: 1. A clear view of the bargain that we may close distinctly, and know what we attain. 2. A solemn confirmation on God's side, of the covenant, and the particular offer he therein makes. 3. A furthering of us in part, and helping us to believe, and a conferring of something offered. 4. A comforting of those upon whom the blessings are conferred. 5. The receiver's solemn and public engaging to God, that he shall observe and make use of all these; the fifth may be looked upon as the second in order.

We may come now to consider the faults we are guilty of in reference to the sacraments; and first in general, then more particularly in reference to baptism and the Lord's supper. We shall not speak to those faults common to Papists and others, which are more doctrinal; such as errors about the persons who may administer them, as that women may administer baptism, etc. But we shall speak to those that are incident to us in our practice.

And, *first*, in general we fail either when too much weight is laid on them, or when too little. 1. When too much; As (1) When there is an absolute necessity supposed to be of them, in order to salvation.

(2) When they are thought to confer grace of themselves by the very partaking of the outward elements, although without faith.

(3) When they are rested on in the outward receiving, as if that made us some way acceptable to God.

(4) When there is a superstitious blind preferring of them to, and with the prejudice of all other ordinances; so that one will neglect preaching and prayer long, but must have baptism and the communion.

(5) When there is a preferring of the outward ordinance to Christ and the thing signified, that is, when men seek more to have the baptism of water than the baptism of the Spirit, and the external communion more than the inward, in which any heaven that is to be found in the ordinances lies; and when men are more commoved [*displeased*] for wanting [*missing*] the sacrament once, than for wanting Christ often and long.

(6) Coming unto, and going from the external ordinances, neglecting him, and without dependence upon him who gives the blessing; and thinking that then all is well enough, seeing they were present at the ordinance.

(7) Going far off for the partaking of a sacrament, to the prejudice of necessary moral duties called for at that time.

(8) Placing more in them than in works of mercy and charity, or doting on them, to the neglect of those.

(9) When they are accounted so holy, as if they might not be given, where Christ allows them to be given; or as if that wronged them, when they are not administrated in some consecrated place, as if one place were now under the gospel more holy than another.

(10) Adding to Christ's institution in the way of administration; as if what he has appointed, because it is common and ordinary, were base, and too low for them.

2. Again, they get too little esteem: (1) When people use them as bare and empty signs, without respect to their due ends.

(2). When there is not that reverence given to God in them as ought to be, according to his command, when we are about so holy and so solemn pieces of worship.

(3) When men carnally, and without preparation and observation, can hazard on them as common things.

(4) When God's grace and goodness in condescending in them to us, is not admired and blessed.

(5) When they are not pondered and studied, that we may know them and be affected in receiving them; and when there is not meditation on them.

(6) Want of delight in them.

(7) Carelessness of them, whether we have them or want them.

(8) Corrupting the Lord's institution in our manner of going about them, either adding to it, or diminishing from it, or changing it, as if men might do so.

(9) Little zeal to keep them pure.

(10) Neglecting the occasions of them, when we may have them with some little pains.

(11) Accounting them better when administered by one minister, than when by another; or esteeming little of them because dispensed by some men (though lawful ministers), as if men add any worth to the ordinance of God.

(12) Never actually laying weight on any of them, or drawing comfort from them, or less than should have been done.

(13) Not wishing and praying that others may have good of them.

(14) Not fearing the wronging of them by multitudes who partake of them, and not endeavoring to have abuses of that kind helped, but making them common to all indifferently and promiscuously.

(15) When folk fear not the breaking of their engagements in them.

(16) When men hang the fruit of them on the administrator's intention, or on the grace of them that are joint partakers with them.

(17) When there is little zeal against the errors that wrong them; as when they are denied by Anabaptists, and when they are corrupted, as in the Mass.

To come particularly to *Baptism*; we may consider: 1. The sins of those who seek it for their children. 2. The sins of these who administer it. 3. The sins of onlookers, especially those who are called to be witnesses. 4. The sins of those who are baptized.

[First] The parents or presenters of children to baptism fail before, in the time, and after the administration of this ordinance. 1. Before (1) By not serious minding that which is to be done. (2) Not considering the child's condition, as needing Christ in that ordinance. Nor (3) The end of that ordinance. (4) Miskinning [*neglecting*] Christ, and not going first to him for conferring the things and blessings signified. (5) Not praying for the child, for the minister, and for a blessing on the ordinance. (6) Not blessing God that there is a covenant of grace that takes in our children; nor offering them to be engaged and received in it. (7) Not minding the most simple and edifying way of going about it, but walking by other rules. (8) Needless delaying of it for carnal ends. (9) Being more desirous of the sign, than of the thing signified.

2. When we come to it we sin: (1) Not seeking to have our own covenant with God (by which we have this privilege of bringing our children to baptism) renewed and made sure. (2) Not considering by what right we claim it to our children. (3) Not repenting of our own breaches of covenant, nor wondering that God keeps with us, who have often broken to him. (4) Not coming with the exercise of fear and reverence. (5) Waiting on it oft times without attention, or minding our duty in what is spoken. (6) Promising for the fashion when we engage for the children's education, and without either judgment or resolute purpose to perform. (7) Being ignorant of what is said or done. (8) Not concurring in prayer for the blessing. (9) Not

undertaking in Christ's strength to perform the duties called for.

3. After the administration of baptism, we fail: (1) In forgetting all our engagements.

(2) In growing careless to maintain any suitable frame, and falling carnal in our mirth on such occasions.

(3) Not being much in prayer for the children, nor insisting or continuing in prayer for the blessing.

(4) Not being faithful, according to our engagements, in educating them: [1] In knowledge, that they may be so trained up as to know what God is. [2] In the fear of God by pressing it upon them by frequent exhortations. [3] In giving them good example. [4] In giving them seasonable correction (but rather sparing them, though to their hurt) when there is cause of correction.

(5) Being also unfaithful in not seriously minding them of their engagements by baptism.

And (6) Much more by giving them evil example.

(7) Conniving at their faults.

(8) Advising them to what is sinful, or sending them where they may meet with snares, or suffering them to go there.

(9) Providing for them the things of this life, without respect to that life which is to come.

(10) Not enabling ourselves that we may discharge our duty to them.

(11) Not insisting to press those things upon them that concern their souls, always; thinking it is enough that sometimes they be spoken to.

(12) Never purposely stirred up and driven by that tie to see for their good.

Nor (13) Repenting our many shortcomings.

Nor (14) Lamenting for what we see sinful in them, when they follow not faithful advice.

These are things that would carefully be looked unto, both by fathers and mothers, and all such as engage for the Christian education of the children whom they present to that ordinance.

[Second] Next, in him that administers baptism, there are oft times diverse failings. As 1. When it is customarily dispensed without respect to its end. 2. When in prayer the child's salvation is not really and seriously aimed at, but for the fashion. 3. When it becomes a burden to dispense it. 4. When it is not thought much of, that Christ admits such into his house, or himself to be a partaker of such mercies, let it be to be a dispenser of them to others. 5. When he follows it not privately with his prayers for a blessing — besides what failings may be in unsuitable words, and human ceremonies, etc, and seeking himself in the words that are spoken, rather than the edification of the hearers.

[Third] When we are witnesses and onlookers, we fail: 1. In wearying and fretting, because we are detained a while. 2. Not setting ourselves to be edified by that we see done, and hear spoken. 3. Not sympathizing with the child or its parents in prayer. 4. Not being thankful to God for such a benefit and ordinance to such a child's behoove. 5. Lightness of carriage and in looking, speaking, or thinking in the time, as if we were not present at such an ordinance of Christ's. 6. Not so seriously taken up in sympathizing with other folk's children, because they are not our own. 7. Removing and withdrawing, and not staying to countenance it. 8. Not minding the child when we are gone. 9. Not helping them as we may, to be answerable to that tie they come under in baptism. 10. Not admonishing them when we see parents and children walk unanswerably, nor testifying against them, nor mourning for the dishonor God gets by baptized persons' unsuitable carriage.

Fourthly, All of us that are baptized fail wonderfully, less or more: 1. That we never (as we ought) reckon ourselves obliged by that tie we come under in baptism.

2. That we neither are, nor seriously study to be, as we ought, answerable to it.

3. That we are not thankful for it to God, who admitted us to that ordinance.

4. That we do not esteem it above all bare carnal birthrights, how great soever.

5. That we do not seek to have it cleared, in the extent of it, as to the privileges and benefits thereby conferred on us and our children.

6. That we do not pursue after the blessing therein covenanted to us.

7. That we do not endeavor the performance of the condition of believing and trusting in Christ, which is the condition of the covenant, of which baptism is the seal.

8. That we do not lay weight on our baptism, for strengthening our faith both in spiritual and temporal difficulties, as if it were no seal of the covenant.

9. That we are often ignorant how to make use of it.

10. That we do not account ourselves wholly God's, as being given away to him in baptism, but live to ourselves.

11. That we do not fight against our lusts, Satan, and the world, according to our baptismal vow.

12. That we do not adorn our Christian profession with a holy life.

13. That we walk and war against Christ, instead of fighting under his banner.

14. That we do not aggravate our sins, as being committed against this tie.

15. That we are not patient under sufferings, nor penitent and humble under all sad dispensations, notwithstanding that we are by our baptism bound to take up the cross.

16. That we do not meditate on our engagements, nor repent for our neglects.

17. That we do not aim and endeavor to come up to the main ends of this ordinance; which are: (1) The evidencing our regeneration and engrafting into Christ. (2) The giving up ourselves to the Father, Son, and Spirit. (3) Sticking by Christ on the most costly and dearest terms. (4) Taking directions from him, and walking in him. (5) Seeking the things above, and not the things that are on earth. (6) Mortification to creatures, and to be crucified with Christ. (7) The improving of this tie, not only for obliging us to these, but

for strengthening us in him to attain them, and to comfort ourselves in all difficulties from this ground. These things are much amissing; alas! they are much amissing. For we lamentably neglect to draw all our strength and furniture, under all tentations, and for all duties, from Christ, by virtue of this baptismal obligation and tie. We resort but seldom to this magazine and storehouse; this precious privilege is (alas!) but very little manured and improved by us.

We come next to speak of the sins we are usually guilty of in reference to the *Lord's supper*; and they be of several sorts. 1. Some are doctrinal, when the institution is corrupted, as in Popery. These we will not now meddle with. 2. Others are practical, and they are either in ministers and elders, who admit and debar; or in such as are admitted or debarred.

And, *first*, we are to consider that men may sin against this ordinance, by not communicating. As 1. When they contemn and willfully neglect it. 2. When they are not frequent in it, but carelessly slight it, when conveniently it may be had. 3. By not foreseeing and ordering our affairs so, as we may not be hindered, when an occasion of that ordinance offers itself near to us. 4. By incapacitating ourselves to be admitted through ignorance or scandal, and by negligence to remove these. 5. By fretting at our being debarred, or at these who have a hand in it. 6. Not repenting of the cause, which procures our being debarred. 7. Not seeking to be humbled under such a weighty censure, and to get the right use of it for the time to come. 8. Suspecting that it proceeds from carnal ends. 9. Reporting amiss of those who do it. 10. Not praying for them that partake in this ordinance, wherever we hear of it in any place. 11. Looking rather to the unfitness of some that are admitted, and the neglect of duty in office-bearers in debarring, than our own. 12. Not sympathizing with them, and yet on that ground absenting ourselves, to wit, for the faults of others.

And here, by the way, we beseech you, take these few words of exhortation. 1. Look on debarring of ignorant and scandalous persons from the Lord's Table, as Christ's ordinance. 2. Consider wherefore yourselves are debarred; and,

as you may be assured it is from no particular prejudice or disrespect, so you would repent and be humbled for that which procures it. 3. By making up what is wanting for the time to come. Your failing in any of these is a fault: and let none think themselves the less bound to the study of holiness, because they are kept from partaking of it; but the sin of some is, they shift it, because they will not stir themselves up to a suitable frame for it, and yet they are not suitably affected with the want of it.

Next, there are faults in them that are admitted to communicate, and these both in hypocrites and true believers respectively; and that, 1. Before. 2. In the time. 3. After receiving the Lord's Supper.

And *first*, before receiving there are many failings. As 1. Ignorance of the end and nature of this ordinance.

2. Not studying to know it.

Nor 3. To have the heart rightly affected with it.

4. Not endeavoring to keep up a high esteem, and holy reverence of the wonderful love of God, in giving of his Son; and the Son's condescending love, in coming to die for sinners.

5. Not seeking to have the covenant clearly closed with by faith, before it be sealed by the sacrament.

6. Not endeavoring to have all bygone quarrels removed, and our peace established.

7. Not searching our way, that we may be well acquainted with our condition, so as we may have the distinct knowledge of it, when we come.

8. Not carefully endeavoring a suitable frame of heart, by prayer, meditation, and reading.

9. Not praying for a blessing, either for him that administers, or for those who are to join with us, to prevent their sin.

10. Not minding their instruction who are under our charge.

11. Not presently renewing (if before closed with and consented to) our covenant before our partaking.

12. Not sequestering our hearts from other things for that end.

13. Not fearing to miss the thing offered, and to contract guilt, instead of getting any good.

14. Not searching after the sins of former communions, and other sins, and repenting of them.

15. What we aim at in these, not aiming at them in Christ's strength.

16. Not aiming and endeavoring constantly to walk with God, and keep communion with him in all duties, that we may have the more access to communion with him in this ordinance.

17. Not laying aside of rooted prejudices and secret malice.

Nor 18. Admonishing such whom we know to lie under any offence of that kind, that they may repent and reform.

19. Unstayedness in our aiming at communion with God in it, or coming to it more selfily [*self-centeredly*], than out of due regard to the glory of God.

Secondly, in our going about this ordinance, there are many faults that usually concur. As 1. Our giving too little respect or too much to it, as is said before of the sacraments in general.

2. Our not exercising faith in the present time, according to the covenant and Christ's institution.

3. Want of love to constrain us, and want of that hunger and thirst that should be after Christ.

4. Want of that discerning of the Lord's body, which should be, so as: (1) To put a difference betwixt bread and wine in the sacrament, and common bread and wine in respect of the end. (2) To put a difference betwixt this ordinance, and Christ himself, who is signified and exhibited by it. (3) To lay in some respect a further weight on this than on the word only, though it be someway of that same nature. (4) To put a difference betwixt this sacrament and other sacraments; and so discerning it, is to conceive of it rightly, [1] In respect of its use and end according to its

institution. [2] In respect of our manner of use-making of it, not only by our senses or bodily organs, but by faith and the faculties of the soul, looking upon, and receiving Christ's body in that ordinance, and feeding on it there as in the word, and more clearly and sensibly. For the sacraments do not give us any new thing which the word did not offer and give before, but they give the same thing more clearly and sensibly. [3] In respect of the blessing; not only waiting for a common blessing for sustaining the body by that bread and wine, but for a spiritual blessing to be conferred by the Spirit to the behoove of the soul. [4] It is so to discern it, as to improve it for obtaining real communion betwixt Christ and us, by a spiritual feeding, as it were, upon his own body; so that, when there is any shortcoming in these, in so far the Lord's body is not discerned.

5. We sin in going about this ordinance by want of reverence, when we come without holy thoughts, and a divine frame, and without love ravishing the heart, which is most suitable at such a time; much more do we sin when we come with carnal, loose or idle thoughts, or any unreverend [*irreverent*] gesture, or with light-like apparel or carriage in coming or sitting.

6. By want of love to others, and sympathy with such as are strangers to communion with Christ.

7. By not distinct closing with Christ, or renewing our covenant with him, or engaging of ourselves to him.

8. By stupidly or senselessly taking the elements without any affection, and by being heartless in the work, and comfortless, because we want sense.

9. By not cheering ourselves by faith, that we may obtain and win to sense, and by pressing too little at sense or comfort.

10. By not improving this ordinance in reference to the general ends of a sacrament, or the particular ends we shall aim at in this sacrament. As (1) Fellowship with Christ himself. (2) Communion in his death and sufferings. (3) The sense of these, and the comfort of them. (4) The lively commemoration of Christ's death and sufferings, and of the love he had to us in all

these, for the stirring up of our love again to him. (5) The strengthening of ourselves in the way of holiness, by strength drawn from him by faith. (6) Minding his glory, and the setting forth thereof, with respect unto, and hope of, his coming again. (7) Particular engaging of our affections one to another. (8) Engaging our hearts by serious resolutions to make for suffering.

11. Lastly, we sin here by not reflecting on our hearts in the mean time, that we may know what they are doing, nor putting up ejaculatory prayers to God in the time; receiving the sacrament with our hand, and yet not receiving him in that means by faith into the heart, nor feeding on him, and satisfying ourselves with him really present in that means. For he is to our faith really present there, as well as in his word.

Thirdly, after communicating, there is a readiness to slip and fall into these faults: 1. Irreverent and carnal removing from the table.

2. Forgetting what we were doing, and falling immediately to loose words or thoughts.

3. Not reflecting on our bypast carriage, to see what we were doing, and what frame we were in, and what we obtained.

4. Not repenting for what was wrong in every piece of our way and carriage.

5. Not following on to obtain what we yet miss, and not still waiting for the blessing, even after we are come away.

6. Not being thankful, if we have obtained anything.

7. Fretting and fainting, if we have not gotten what we would have.

8. Or being indifferent and careless whether we get or want [*lack*].

9. Carnally loose after communions, as if we had no more to do.

10. Vain, or puffed up, if we think we have attained anything.

11. Little or no keeping of promise made to God, but continuing as before.

12. Digressing on the commendation or censure of what was heard, or seen, rather than making use of it for our profit.

13. Making that ordinance an occasion of contention, for some faults we conceive to have been about it; whereas it should be ground of union and love.

14. Not entertaining tenderness, and a frame that may keep us ready to communicate again.

15. Not meditating on what we have been doing.

16. Nor longing again for the like occasion.

17. Not helping others that did not come, or had not the occasion of coming to it.

18. Conceitedness, because we were admitted.

19. Despising others who might not be admitted.

20. Mocking, or secretly snuffing at any who goes, or has gone about it with more tenderness than we, or who endeavors to keep their promises better than we. This sin of emulation and spiritual envy, at any who outruns us in tenderness and proficiency (touched in these two last) is, as very natural to us, so most dangerous; it participates of *cursed Cain's*. This sin is the worst of all malignity, and is always accompanied with a woeful and devilish satisfaction with, and complacency in, the shortcomings of others, that so we may be the more noticed.

21. Secret disdain at tender Christians, besides us, as hypocritical.

22. Turning aside to live like others who have been debarred; as if there ought to be no difference put betwixt those who have this badge, and those who want [*lack*] it; or sitting up, as if all were done, when we have communicated.

23. Want of watchfulness against recurring temptations and snares; vanity and conceit, if we attain anything; and want of pity to those who did not come so good speed.

24. Indiscreet speaking, either to the commending or censuring of speakers and forms, but little or nothing to edification.

In the *last* place, we shall speak a little to this question; *If, and how the admission of scandalous persons pollutes the communion? And if it be sinful to receive it with such persons? Or, if joint communicants be thereby defiled?* Let us, for answer, consider *pollution* distinctly, with reference to these four things: 1. In reference to the sacraments themselves. 2. In reference to the admitted that are scandalous. 3. In reference to the admitters. 4. In reference to the joint communicants.

First, as to the sacraments, there is a two-fold pollution. The first is intrinsic and essential, which by corruption of the institution of Christ, turns it then to be no sacrament, as it is in the mass; or to be hurtful, as when significant ceremonies, sinfully devised by men, are mixed and added besides, and contrary to Christ's institution. The first everts the nature of the sacrament, and it is henceforth no more a sacrament; the second poisons it, so that it may not be received without partaking of that sin actively.

There is another way of polluting the sacrament, that is extrinsic and circumstantial, not in essentials, but in our use-making of it, and the application thereof beyond Christ's warrant; as when it is administered to one upon whom Christ allows it not. In that case, it is not a sacrament to that person; yet it is so in itself. This pollution is a profaning of it to us, or making it common. Thus the word of promise generally applied in a congregation, without separation in application, betwixt the precious and the vile, is a profaning of the word (for the word of promise should not be made common more than the sacrament) as it is marked, Ezk. 22:26, *The priests have profaned my holy name, they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, between the clean and the unclean:* Yet, in that case the word ceases not to be God's word, though it be so abused. Or, as an admonition cast before a profane mocker, is but the abusing of an holy thing, yet it alters not the nature of it; as a pearl, cast before a sow, is puddled and abused, yet it does not alter its inward nature, but it still remains a pearl. So it is here in the word and sacraments; they are

abused in their use, when misapplied; yet still (the institution being kept) they are the ordinances of God. Thus was the temple said to be profaned, when it was made more common in its use than was allowed; yet was it still the temple of the Lord; and so, admission of scandalous persons may thus be called a polluting of the sacraments, but not essential in themselves.

Secondly, consider pollution with reference to persons who are admitted; and so the sacraments may be polluted: 1. By grossly scandalous persons. 2. By hypocrites. 3. By believers not exercising their graces. The sacrament is polluted by, and to all these, because, as *to the pure all things (lawful) are pure, so to the unclean and unbelieving, nothing is pure, their mind and conscience being defiled.* Thus their praying, sacrificing, hearing, plowing, etc. all is unclean; and, by proportion, to believers, though in a good and clean state, yet in an evil and unholy frame, the sacrament may be said in some sense to be unclean and polluted by them to themselves.

Thirdly, as to the office-bearers, who are the admitters, the sacrament cannot be profaned essentially, the institution being kept pure; yet may they sin, and be guilty of profaning it, by opening the door wider than Christ has allowed, and not keeping the right bounds. And ministers may so sin, in promiscuous applying of the promises and consolations of the covenant, as well as in applying its seals; and both these are sins to them. Yet these cases would be excepted;

1. When such a scandal is not made known to them. Scandalous persons may be admitted, because they are not bound to look on them as such, till discovered.

2. When such scandals cannot be made out judicially, though possibly they are true in themselves. They may, though against the inclination and affection of the admitters, be admitted, yet not against their conscience; because, that being a high censure in Christ's house, his servants are not to walk arbitrarily (for that would bring confusion with it) but by rules

given them, whereof this is one, *Not to receive an accusation, but under two or three witnesses.*

3. When by some circumstances it proves not edifying, but rather hurtful to the church, or the persons concerned. As (1) When the scandal is in such a matter as is not expressly determined in the word, but is by consequence to be deduced from it; as suppose it be meant such a point of truth as has divines, that are godly, dissentient in it; or in such a practice (suppose perjury) as is evil indeed in itself, but by deduction and consequence (which is not so clear) to be applied; or it is in such things as affect not a natural conscience, as fornication, drunkenness and adultery, etc. do; or in such things as contradict not expressly any truth.

And (2) When the scandal of these sins is by universality become little among men, or there is not easy access, in an edifying way, to decide in them, or censure them; there is still a right and a wrong in these, which a minister in doctrine may reprove, yet he may forbear a judicial sentence in such cases, as it seems Paul did with the Corinthians, amongst whom there were several sorts of offenders.

[1] Incestuous fornicators, or such as sinned against nature's light; these (1 Cor. 5:3-5. etc) he commands to be excluded or excommunicated.

[2] Such as by corrupt doctrine made schisms, and misled the people in factions, to the prejudice of the apostle's authority and doctrine (1 Cor. 3:3, etc); *Deceitful workers*, (2 Cor. 11:13), these for a time (2 Cor. 10:6), he spares for the people's sake (2 Cor. 12:19).

[3] Some weakly, and carnally misled into factions (1 Cor. 13:1-4), these he endeavors to recover.

[4] Some guilty of faults about the sacrament, in their wrong manner of going about it (1 Cor. 11); these he reproveth and labors to amend, yet allows them to go on and celebrate the sacrament, but does not debar for the time, either factious ministers or people from it, as he had done the other. Neither is it likely that the communion was omitted, or they debarred; for he does not reprove for debarring them, as he does

for wronging the institution. The reason is because that which warrants debarring, and censures of all sorts, is edification; and when that end cannot be gained to a people or person, such censure may be omitted; and, except some bounds were to be fixed here, the difficulty in abounding differences would prove inextricable: And therefore, when a sin is become epidemical, and very universal, on the one hand, the more tender and conscientiously scrupulous would be instructed to much sobriety, and earnestly dealt with, not to indulge themselves a liberty to rend the church, or to divide from it when such persons are admitted, being otherwise capable of the privilege; because exclusion in this case, by a sentence, from the sacrament, would probably miss its end, which is edification, and would weaken the authority of the ordinance of discipline, if not hazard the liberty of the gospel. On the other hand, ministers would by all means take heed, and be obtested in the name of the Lord, that they (which is readily incident in an hour of tentation) run not on the extreme shifting their duty; insulting as it were over tender consciences, and strengthening the hands of the wicked by compliance with, or accession to these sins; but would, under the pain of making themselves horridly guilty, manage obvious ways, deal freely and faithfully in making use of the key of doctrine, when the use of the other will not in all appearance be so much for edification; that by public doctrinal separating the precious from the vile, and by straight down-right private dealing, they may in the sight of God commend themselves to every man's conscience.

Fourthly, let us consider if this ordinance be polluted to the joint receivers, suppose that some are sinfully admitted by the office-bearers of the church. And we say that it is not a pollution or sin to them to partake with such; for the sacrament may be blessed to them notwithstanding, as Christ's ordinance; even as when the word is unwarrantably applied in promises and admonitions, so that pearls are cast before swine. Yet, supposing some tender souls to be present, they may meddle warrantably with that abused word as God's

word, and it may prove useful to them. For confirming this truth, we offer these reasons;

1. The word and sacraments are of one nature, and are polluted, or made use of, one and same way; only the difference is in this, that the one usually is doctrinally wronged, the other disciplinary.

2. Because that unwarrantable admission of others is not the communicator's, but the minister's sin; therefore it cannot wrong them more than want of preparation in others who come.

3. Any other's sin cannot loosen me from my obligation to a duty. Now, it is the duty of everyone, as *to examine themselves*, so, being prepared by suitable self-examination, *to eat* (1 Cor. 11:28), and yet, in that church of Corinth, many did sinfully approach to the Lord's table. Now, though the command requiring self-examination will not warrant rulers not to examine; yet it will warrant private communicants to endeavor rightly to go about that duty themselves, and not to be much anxious what others do, as if other men's carriage were the ground of our approaching to the Lord's table.

4. It is notwithstanding a sacrament, without any mixture of men's corrupt additions; and so the neglecting of it is the neglecting of a sacrament.

5. If scandalous receivers did corrupt it to others, then a corrupt minister could never celebrate a sacrament; which would contradict the Lord's way in appointing such sometimes to dispense his mysteries both in the Old and New Testament; and, if the minister's corruption pollute not the ordinance, much less with the scandal of any others.

6. The practice of the Lord's people in receiving sacraments this way, both before Christ's incarnation, and since, proves it.

7. It would be a great and inextricable snare to consciences, if the fruit of their communicating depended not only on their own preparing themselves, but also on the ministers and joint receivers; if their not preparation [*preparing*], or

failing in it, brought guilt on us, it were impossible that ever we could with clearness receive the sacrament.

For (1) It is hard to think a communion is celebrated, but there is one or more who should not be admitted; and the admission of one or two, as well as of many, is a profaning of the ordinance. Yea, if we thought them to be scandalous, yea, if we knew them not to be holy, we could not in faith communicate with them, lest the ordinance be defiled by us, if their defiling were ours.

(2) The presence of a hypocrite would defile it to us; for his hypocrisy defiles it to him, and he has no right before God to come. Neither would it warrant us that we knew not. For [1] Many do sin when they know not. [2] It is not our knowing his sin that defiles the sacrament, but it is his hypocrisy and rottenness. [3] Thus the same sacrament might be as God's ordinance participated warrantably by one who knew not, and not by another who knew this; which were hard to make out.

(3) Believers, their being out of a frame would pollute this ordinance to us, and incapacitate us to receive it; for it is in that case sin to them, and we should keep as great a distance from their sins, as from the sins of others.

Yea (4) One could not communicate with himself (to speak so) if that ground were true. For [1] We have corruption. [2] We know we have it, as well as we can know any other man's. [3] It pollutes the ordinance in part to ourselves, and brings guilt with it; therefore, if sin known in another would do it, much more that which is in ourselves. For if it be corruption, as known to be in others that pollutes it; then that same, known in ourselves, must have that same effect: for, *a quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*.

If it is said: 1. *This corruption is but half* (to say so) *in ourselves, weakened by grace, and not allowed*. Answer. Yet it is corruption, and certainly half-corruption in ourselves will weigh more than whole corruption in another, especially considering that necessarily pollutes in part all our holy things.

2. If it is said, *We cannot be freed from corruption while here, and so we could not go about any duty if that reasoning were good.* Answer. (1) A mixture of good and bad in the visible church is as certain as a mixture of grace and corruption in a believer. (2) If our own corruption, which involves us in sin in the manner of our doing duties, will not loosen us from a commanded duty, much less sin in others; yea, we are no less prohibited to communicate with sin and corruption in ourselves, than in others; and also we are commanded as effectually to purge our own hearts, as the church.

This truth in doctrine, the sober of the Independents approve as to themselves (whatever be their practice as to others) as the only way to eschew confusion, and keep unity and order.¹

As for other questions, as, How the sacraments seal? or what they seal? the *major* or the *minor* proposition? the promise as a covenant, or as a testament legating Christ and his benefits to us? these would require a large dispute than our intended work will admit, and therefore we shall not meddle with them.

[E] The last thing, in which we shall instance the breach of this command, is in reference to the duty of *fasting*; concerning which we would take notice of two things: 1. That fasting is a solemn piece of external religious worship, when rightly and religiously discharged. 2. That men may be guilty of many sins as to their practice in reference thereto.

First, That it is a piece of external worship is clear: 1. From precepts commanding it. 2. From the practices and examples of the saints in scripture. 3. From scripture directions given to regulate us in it. Yet it differs from prayer and sacraments: (1) That those are ordinary pieces of worship, but this is extraordinary, proceeding

from special occasions; either: [1] Of a cross lying on. Or [2] Feared and imminent. [3] Or some great thing which we are to suit for, or such like. Although it be an extraordinary piece of worship; yet, the more holy we read any to have been, we find they have been the more in this duty of fasting.

(2) We are to consider that fasting is not of itself a piece of immediate worship, as prayer, etc; but mediate only, as it is made use of to be helpful to some other duty, such as praying, humbling of ourselves, mortification, etc.

Again (3) Fasting may be considered in four respects. [1] As it is gone about in secret, by one single person setting himself apart for prayer, and for fasting to that end; many instances whereof are in scripture. [2] As it is private, or a little more public, being gone about by a family, or some few persons joining together; as Esther and her maids. [3] As it is public, being performed by a congregation; as Acts 13:2-3. [4] As gone about by a whole national church. These four are all mentioned, Zech. 12:11-12, where we find, [1] The whole land. [2] Families together. [3] Families apart. [4] Particular persons, or wives apart, setting about this duty.

(4) Consider fasting in respect of the causes that call for it; and there are, [1] Public causes (Dan. 9:2). [2] Particular and personal, as of David for his child (2 Sam. 12:16). [3] For others (Psa. 35:13). And [4] It is to be minded in a special way, for helping us against spiritual evils, casting out of devils, mortifying of lusts; as also, under sad temporal crosses and losses (Matt. 17:21; 1 Cor. 9. ult).

Next, as there are some times and cases in all these, which call for fasting with prayer to be seriously gone about; so we may sin in reference to this duty many ways: As when it is slighted, and not gone about at all; and thus men are guilty, either: 1. By contemning it. Or 2. Counting it not necessary. Or 3. By negligence, so that we will not be at pains to stir up ourselves to a frame for it. Or 4. Will not leave our pleasures or work for it. 5. In not esteeming highly of it. 6. In not laboring to have fit opportunities to go about it. 7. In scaring

¹ So Hooker's *survey*, part 2. Amesius, *de conse.* cap. 4. lib 1. Norton *adver. Apol. resp. ad ultimam quaestionem.* [Ed. Thomas Hooker, *Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline* (London, 1648). William Ames, *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof* (London, 1643). John Norton, *Responsio ad totam quaestionem Syllogem* (London, 1648). Durham also dealt with this question of whether sinful communicants or administrators of the ordinance pollute the sacrament in A Treatise Concerning Scandal (Dallas: Naphtali Press, 1990), 120ff.]

[*shrinking from*] it as a burden. 8. In casting it up as hypocrisy to others, and mocking at it in them. 9. In not joining in our affection with others we know are fasting. 10. In our infrequent use of it. 11. In neglecting causes that relate to the public, or to others; contenting ourselves with what relates to our own necessity. 12. In not being affected with our neglect of that duty, nor mourning for it, and repenting of it, nor being humbled under the many evils which the neglecting of it carries along with it. 13. At least, neglecting one part or other of this duty of fasting. 14. Not setting ourselves seriously to be at the end designed in fasting, which makes us either neglect it, or go formally about it.

In going about this duty of fasting, there are two evils to be avoided; The first is giving too much to it, as if it did merit (Isa. 58:1), or as if itself did mortify sin, or make holy, or were religious worship in itself. The second is, on the other hand, when it gets too little, being looked on as not necessary or profitable for the framing of one's spirit, and fitting them for prayer, self-examination or wrestling with God, and not accounted a fit means for that end, more than when it is neglected.

In speaking of the sins we are guilty of, as to this duty, we are to consider more particularly 1. How we sin before it, in our preparation to it. 2. In our going about it. 3. When it is ended.

And, first, before our going about it, we sin: 1. When the right end of a fast is mistaken, and it is not considered as a means to help us to a more spiritual frame.

2. When we do not study to be clear in, and to consider the special grounds that call us to it, not aiming to have our heart from conviction affected suitably with them.

3. When we are not put to it from the right motive, but go about it selfily [*selfishly*], to be seen of men (as Matt. 6:16), or for the fashion.

4. When it is not gone about in obedience to a command of God, and so we fast to ourselves (Zech. 7:5).

5. When there is no secret examination of our own hearts, to try what frame we are in, what lusts reign in us, or prevail over us.

Nor 6. Any particular dealing with God beforehand to be enabled for this duty, and helped in it, and that both for ourselves and others.

7. When we are not endeavoring to be in good terms with God, and studying to be clear as to that, before we come to put up suits to him.

8. When we neglect Christ, and turn legal in it.

9. When we do not separate ourselves from all other affairs timeously the night before.

10. When we are lazy in rising so timely that day as should be.

11. When we do not (if it be secret) labor to be unseen in it to any.

12. Not setting ourselves seriously to it (Dan. 9:3), abstracting ourselves from diversions, and rousing up ourselves for it.

Secondly, in the time of fasting, we sin: 1. By eating unnecessarily, though it be little; as we may sin by not eating, when not eating disables us in duties. Yet the body ought to be in such a measure affected, as may not hinder us in prayer; but many scarce suffer it to be touched, or in the least measure affected or afflicted with abstinence.

2. In lightness of apparel, or such fineness in it, as they make use of on other days.

3. In gestures, looking light-like, laughing; and in such a carriage as is very unsuitable for that day.

4. In hypocrisy, there being a more seeming weightiness and heaviness than really there is.

5. In having wrong ends before us. As (1) To seem holy. (2) To carry on some temporal or politic design, as Jezebel did against Naboth to get his vineyard. (3) To get advantage of some other, and to make some sinister designs digest and go down the better, as Isa. 58:4, *To smite with the gift of wickedness*; as, *under pretence of long prayers*, to take the more liberty to injure others. (4) For strife and debate, and

strengthening of factions and parties. (5) We sin here, by neglecting works of mercy.

6. By taking pains in works lawful on other days, *exacting all our labor*, or a part of it, which is unbecoming on that day.

7. By taking delight in temporal things, *finding our own pleasures*.

8. By words or thoughts of lawful things, diverting us from the work of the day.

9. By wearying of it as a burden; *not calling it a delight*.

10. By wishing it were over, that we might be at our work or pastime again (Amos 8:5).

11. By negligence in prayer, or not being frequent and fervent in it, nor pertinent to that day and the end of it; for there should be in all these something on a fast-day suitable to it, and which is called for on that day more than on other days.

12. By not joining seriously with others, when we pray, especially in particulars which concern others.

13. By little mourning or heart-melting, especially in secret duties, which on that day would be more frequent, more serious and affecting than on others days, that day being set apart for it. And, if private, we should be more abstracted, even from ordinary refreshments and mirth, than upon a Sabbath; and the frame of the heart would be then more humble, mournful, and denied to otherwise lawful comforts.

14. By little of the exercise of repentance or sense of sin that day, for humbling the heart in the sense of our own vileness, and loathing of ourselves.

15. By little suitable up-taking of God in his holiness, displeasure against sin, etc; which on that day is in an especial way called for.

16. By not distinct covenanting with him, and engaging to him against our seen evils and defects: a fast-day would be a covenanting-day, as we see in Ezra and Nehemiah.

17. By being defective in reading and meditating on what may humble us; but much more, when,

by looks, words, or thoughts, we mar the right frame and set of our hearts.

18. By resting on fasting, or being legal in it.

19. By not minding the profiting of others, nor sympathizing with their wants and case; not being careful to see those of our family or charge observant of it.

20. By not abstaining from the marriage-bed (1 Cor. 7:5).

Thirdly, we sin after fasting: 1. Soon returning to other thoughts. 2. Letting any frame we had attained, slack and wear out. 3. Forgetting our confession and engagements, and falling to former sins, and neglecting these duties to which we have engaged. 4. Being rigid with others we have to do with. 5. Not insisting in prayer for those things we aimed at in fasting. 6. Not trying and observing if anything we prayed for has been obtained. 7. Not reflecting upon our carriage in it, that we may know how it was discharged. 8. Not humbled under our many shortcomings and failings in it. 9. Glad when it was done, because that restraint was taken off our carnal humors. 10. Sitting down and resting on that we have done, as if all were done. 11. Thinking ourselves something better by our outward performance. 12. Being vain of it, if it be well to our sense. 13. Being unwatchful after it, and not studying suitableness in our following carriage, so that it is but the *hanging down of the head for a day*.

These particulars, applied to our own hearts, may be useful for our conviction and humiliation. Ah! *who can say, I am clean?* All of us are guilty, either by neglecting such duties, or by thus and thus going about them unsuitably. From these sins we may read also the contrary duties, or qualifications, that are required for the right discharging of these duties. The preventing of these sins will bring in the duties called for, and the right manner of going about them. Otherwise, the going about these duties, without the manner requisite, is but, as it were, the making of some *image* for ourselves in the Lord's worship, which he has not commanded; and so he may say, *Is it such a fast that I have chosen?* (Isa. 58:5), or, 'Is it such a prayer I called for?' and, *Who hath required these things at your hands?* (Isa. 1:12).

These questions, which the Lord puts to our conscience, will make many prayers and praises, and much worship, that now seems to be in great bings or heaps, come down to a small bulk, when they are thus fanned, sifted and searched by this sieve, and all those things casten [*cast away*] which are found to be breaches of this command.

III. We come now to the manner how this command is pressed, which is: 1. By a reason. 2. By a commination. 3. By a promise. All which speak a readiness in men to fail in this command, and a special notice that God takes the duties required in it, and of the sins forbidden in it. Men might readily say, 'What needs so much rigidity in the manner of worship? and, if it be to the true God, though it have in it some mixture of those things which have been formerly abused, it is not much to be stood upon.' The Lord therefore, in pressing it, adds this reason, *I am a jealous God* 'that will not only have my church and spouse honest and chaste indeed, but chaste-like.' As Caesar said, His wife behooved, not only to abstain from all dishonesty, but from all suspicious carriage; even so will the Lord have his people carry so to him, as a wife should carry to a jealous husband, with such circumspection as he may not have any occasion of suspicion. *Jealousy* here implies two things. 1. A facility or aptness, as it were, to suspect anything which may look like a giving that to any other, which is due to God. So a husband is said to be jealous, when he is apt to suspect want of love in his wife, and is ready to gather from every circumstance her inclination to another, even though there be no palpable demonstrative ground of it. Thus jealousy is taken amongst men.

2. It imports a severe indignation against everything which gives ground of suspicion; it cannot abide that. Hence jealousy is called *the rage of a man* (Prov. 6:38). This wrong will not be endured, when many others will be dispensed with. Anything that seemingly slights him, or inclines the heart to another, is to jealousy insufferable. These two, after the manner of men (as many other things) are applied to God, to show that he will not admit that which is suspicious-like in his service; but, if his people

depart from him in deviating in the least from the rule given, he will be provoked to be avenged on them for it. This is the force of the reason. The commination or threatening added confirms this; it is in these words: *Visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children*. To *visit*, here, is to punish the children for the fathers' faults: Though God should seem for the time to forget the breaches of this command, and not to take notice of corruptions introduced by men in his worship; yet, he says, *I will visit*, or revenge that iniquity, not only upon the present race, but upon the following, even *upon the third and fourth generation*.

For clearing this, let us see: 1. What is the punishment here threatened? 2. On whom it is, upon the children of them that transgress this command. 3. How it is executed? 4. Why the Lord does so? that we may vindicate this place, and clear it from appearance of contradiction with that in *Ezk. 18*, where it is said, *The son shall not bear the iniquity of his father*.

The first question is, *What it is that is here threatened?* Answer. We do not think that this place speaks only of temporal punishments, and that of Ezekiel of eternal; for the scope of both will contradict this. For that passage (*Ezk. 18*), is occasioned from the people's present straits, and speaks directly of temporal judgments; so that distinction will not clear this seeming contradiction. Therefore, we conceive here to be understood mainly spiritual and eternal evils, which God threatens to the children of wicked parents. (For, that temporal judgments follow them, and are included in the threatening, there is no question.)

This will be clear, 1. By considering, that the thing threatened here is that punishment which the breach of, or iniquity committed against this command, or other commands, deserves; he *visiteth the iniquities of the fathers on the children*, etc. But that which the breach of this law, or which the parents guilt deserves, is eternal judgment, and not temporal only; *ergo*.

2. The thing threatened here is proportionally of the same nature with the thing promised afterward, the one being opposite to the other.

But it were a wronging of God's mercy to his people to say that his *mercy* only looks to temporal benefits; *ergo* this threatening must also look unto, and comprehend, eternal plagues.

3. The scope may clear it, which is to restrain parents from the sin here forbidden; because by such sins they bring wrath, not only on themselves, but on their posterity after them, even when they are gone, as you have it, Jer. 32:18. Now, this reason would not have such weight if the plagues threatened to parents were eternal, and to their children but temporal.

4. This threatening must put some difference betwixt the children of the wicked, and the children of the godly. But temporal difficulties and strokes will not clear up this difference; for often the children of the godly share most in these. It must therefore be in spiritual things they differ mainly.

5. What is threatened here must, especially in the event, light upon *the third and fourth generation*, and not ordinarily go beyond that. Now, ordinarily the children of wicked men in outward things thrive best unto the third and fourth generation, and after that come their temporal judgments; therefore it cannot be that which is here only or principally meant.

6. Consider Cain, Ham, etc, upon whose posterity this curse was peculiarly derived, and there you will find somewhat more than what is temporal.

The second thing to be cleared here is *the party threatened to be thus punished*. It is not the fathers that are expressed, but the children after them, as it is, Jer. 32:18. All is forfeited, the whole stock and family. Concerning which let us take these three considerations along with us:

1. That these children punished are not innocent in themselves; but, being guilty before the Lord by original corruption, or, by both it and actual sin, making themselves liable to such plagues, they have no reason to say, *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge*. For, whether the judgments be temporal or spiritual, the children have deserved them, and cannot say they are wronged. And this

consideration reconciles this place with that of Ezekiel, where God puts them to it, thus: None innocent are plagued; but you are plagued. Therefore, he says, read your own sin out of your own plagues.

2. Consider, that the threatening against children of such parents is here limited to the third or fourth generation; all their posterity is not cursed thereby. (1) Because God's kindness is such as to leave a door open for penitents. All fell in Adam, yet mercy opened a door of hope to sinful man. And surely the threatenings of this new covenant are not so peremptory, as to shut the door of *mercy upon sinners*. (2) The third and fourth generation are especially threatened, because these are nearest the parent, and have most of his nature in them; he knows them best, and often he may live to see these. Therefore the Lord threatens these, that it may most affect parents; it being for the second, third, and fourth generation, that they most ordinarily travel.

3. Consider, that in this threatening (as also in the promise following) God does not give or lay down a constant rule, to which he will be tied, as if he could not do otherwise at any time. For to say that were derogatory to his election, and the sovereignty of his grace; and therefore that is not the scope. But here he gives a declaration of what usually and ordinarily he does, and what men, if he deals with them in justice, may expect from him. Yet it is still so to be understood as the son of a wicked person may be found to be elect, and the son of a godly person rejected; that he may continue his plagues longer than the third or fourth generation, or break them off sooner when he thinks good. For though by this he would restrain parents from sin, yet has he a door open to many such children for mercy; even as the contrary promise has many exceptions as to the children of godly parents, that walk not in the paths of their parents going before them, as many known instances of both in scripture do make out.

The third question is, *How God doth execute this threatening?* or, *How does he reach children with eternal plagues for their parents' sins?*

Answer. He does it certainly, and he does it justly. Therefore the children must not only be considered as guilty, but as guilty of the sins of their parents; which we may thus conceive:

1. As to the child of a wicked parent, lying in natural corruption, God denies and withholds his renewing and restraining grace which he is not obliged to confer; and the Lord in this may respect the parent's guilt justly.

2. When grace is denied, then follows the temptation of the parent's practice, the devil stirring up to the like sin, and they furthering their children to wickedness by their example, advice, authority, etc, so that it comes to pass in God's justice, that they are given up to vent their natural corruption in these ways, and so come (as it is, Psa. 49:13), to *approve* their parent's saying.

3. Upon this follows God's casting the child, now guilty of his parent's faults, into eternal perdition with him. And that this is the meaning of the threatening will appear by the examples of God's justice in this matter, when wicked parents have children that are not so much miserable in regard of temporal things, as they are wicked, cursed, and plagued with ungodliness; so was Cain's children, so were the children of Ham, and so were Esau's, who were all for a long time prosperous in the world, but following their fathers' sins (a main part of their curse) God afterward visited them on them, with sad temporal judgments also.

4. If it is asked, *Why God thus plagues and threatens the children of wicked parents?* Answer. (1) God does it to make sin hateful, seeing it brings often a forfeiture of spiritual blessings; yea, of blessings of all sorts, upon whole generations and families.

(2) To strike the more terror into others, who by this may be scared from sin, and made to stand in awe of God, who is so dreadful as to put a mark of infamy on the race and posterity of his enemies.

(3) The more to affect and weight the sinner; it is a part of his punishment to know that by his sin he has not only made himself miserable, but

all his posterity. And these may be the reasons why, as it were, by the light of nature, all nations in some cases are led not only to punish the persons of some malefactors, but to forfeit and put a note of infamy on their posterity for some kinds of faults.

(4) This becomes [*suits*] God's greatness, that men may know how sovereign he is, and how treason against the most high is to be accounted of.

(5) It is to commend holiness, and the necessity of it, to God's people; and to put them to enrich themselves and their children in God, and a good conscience, rather than in all temporal riches.

These same questions and answers may serve to clear what concerns the promise also, they being suitably applied to it.

It is further to be observed that the Lord expresses wicked men under that notion, *Them that hate me*, to show what indeed, and on the matter, sin, even the least sin, amounts unto. It is hatred of God, as being done (as it were) in despite of him, and preferring some lust to him. For there is no question but, were God loved, holiness (which is his image) would be loved also; and where it is universally hated, so must he be. For a man cannot serve two masters, where their commands and actings are contrary; but he must hate the one, and love the other. And seeing it is certain that sinners make sin their master, and do not hate it; therefore they must hate God, who gives contrary commands; and so sometimes sinners wish that there were not such commands. Again, he expresses the godly in the promise, under these two designations: 1. *These that love me*; that is the inward fountain, and comprehensive sum of all duties. 2. *Those that keep my commandments*; that looks to the outward effects of love, and is the proof of it. So that there is no mids [*middle ground*] betwixt these two, to love God, and keep his commandments, and to hate him, and slight or break his commandments; and so no mids betwixt God's gracious promise to parents and children, and his curse on both.

Lastly, it would be in a particular way observed, that though every sin has hatred to God in it, yet

he puts this name of hating him in a special way upon the sin of corrupting his worship and service, to show that there is a special enmity against God in that sin, and that it is in a special way hateful to him; as upon the other hand he takes zeal for the purity of his worship, as a singular evidence of love to him.

Let us close this command with some words for use. And 1. You may see what good or evil to us and ours, and that eternally, there is in disobedience or in holiness. O parents, what mercy is it to you, yourselves, and to your children, that you be godly! Alas! this curse here threatened is too palpable upon many children, who are cursed with profanity from the womb upward. Why do you that are parents wrong your poor infants? and why neglect you that which is best for them? Here also there is matter of much comfort to parents fearing God. This promise is a standing portion to a thousand generations, which, though it be not peremptory as to all individual persons, yet, (1) It secludes none. (2) It comprehends many. (3) It gives ground for us to be quiet for all our posterity, till they by their own carriage disclaim that covenant, wherein this promise is included. (4) It gives warrant for a believer to expect that God may make up his election amongst his seed rather than amongst others. It is true, sometimes he chooses some of the posterity of wicked parents, yet oft times the election of grace falls upon the posterity of the godly. (5) It is a ground upon which we may quiet ourselves for temporal things needful to our children; certainly these promises are not for nought, Psa. 37:26, Psa. 102:ult; Psa. 112:2; Prov. 20:17.

2. Be humble, O be humble before God; for he is jealous.

3. Abhor sin; for it is hateful.

4. Love holiness; for it is useful to us and ours. (1) Thereby our children have temporal mercies so far as is needful (Psa. 37:26). (2) They have spiritual and saving mercies amongst them. (3) They have all church-privileges, as being the children of them that are within God's covenant.

5. Children, be humbled under the sense of the iniquity of your parents. When you remember their ways, or possess what unjustly they have gotten, you become guilty of their sins without repentance. Especially, you have need to take notice of this, that are the children of parents that have opposed the purity of God's service and worship, and the work of its reformation, and have been corrupters of it. Children may be partakers of their parents' faults, and so plagued for them, several ways; and we think that this forfeiture is more than ordinary. And therefore, as amongst men, there are special crimes beyond ordinary procuring such a sentence; so is it here. And (1) They be guilty by following their footsteps, in walking in their parents' sins, as Jeroboam's children did. (2) In approving their fathers' way, praising their fathers' sayings or doings; as it is, Psa. 49:13. (3) In winking at their parents sins and wickedness. (4) In boasting of their oppressions, bloodshed, etc, as if they were acts of valor and manhood. (5) In being content that their fathers sinned, if it gained any possession to them. (6) In possessing and enjoying, without repentance, what to their knowledge they sinfully purchased. (7) In spending prodigally and riotously what the parents covetously gathered; the sin of the parent, here, is the feed of the son's sin. (8) In professing sorrow for the want of occasion to live in ignorance, profanity, or looseness, as their fathers did (as in Jer. 44:17-19). They said that things went well then. (9) In not being humbled before God for the sins of predecessors, nor confessing them to him (as, Lev. 26:40). (10) Not repairing the losses or injuries which we knew they did to any that were wronged or oppressed by them. ☞

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Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism

A Book Review of Gordon H. Clarks *Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism* (The Trinity Foundation, 1990).

Reviewed by W. Gary Crampton, Th.D.



In the Westminster Confession of Faith (I:8), we read: “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical.”

According to the Westminster divines, only the original biblical manuscripts (the *autographa*) were “immediately inspired by God.” The copies which we possess today are to be considered “authentical,” but in the strictest sense, only the *autographa* may be said to be the infallible, inerrant Word of God.

The problem is that none of these original manuscripts is extant. What we have are copies of copies (*apographa*). But, as Gordon Clark points out in his *Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism*,¹ although it is true that we do not possess the autographic codex (i.e., the physical document), it is a *non sequitur* to assume that we do not have the autographic text (i.e., the words). The good copies we do have, as a whole, can and do retain the latter without the former.

Orthodox Christianity makes no assertion that no errors have crept into the text of the copies. God never claims to have inspired translators and copyists (albeit, he does promise to keep his Word pure throughout the ages; confirm Isaiah 40:8). Whereas mistakes in the *autographa* would attribute error to God, defects in the individual copies attribute error only to the copyists. It is only the original authors who were inspired by God to write without error (see 2 Peter 1:20,21; 2

Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 1:9). And the individual copies are to be considered the inspired Word of God only to the degree that they reflect the original Word. That is to say, writes Clark, “that no one should hold that the King James Version [or any other particular version] is the infallible autograph” (37).

Unlike the autographic text, the copies are not free from error. The branch of study known as “textual criticism” undertakes the careful comparison and evaluation of the copies to determine the original manuscripts. As one might imagine, says Clark, textual criticism “is a very difficult and delicate procedure,” even though it is a “legitimate and necessary” task (9,22).

As far as the Old Testament is concerned, there is little or no disagreement. The real controversy concerns the New Testament. But this really should not be. There are nearly 5000 New Testament manuscripts extant, as well as numerous translations from the early church. Too, there are over 2000 church lectionaries that are based on portions of the New Testament, and some 85 papyri which contain fragments of the New Testament texts. It may be said with little question that there is not one piece of literature in all of antiquity that is as well validated as the New Testament (9-11,49).

This is why the Westminster Confession of Faith, as cited above, properly distinguishes between the *autographa* and the *apographa*, stating that only the originals are “immediately inspired by God.” But then the Confession goes on to say that the copies of the books of the Bible that we possess have “by his singular care and providence [been] kept pure in all ages, [and] are therefore authentical.”

What is being taught here is that even though no one particular copy is without error,

¹ Gordon H. Clark, *Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism* (The Trinity Foundation, 1986). The pagination used in the body of this review is from Clark's book.

nevertheless, due to God's providential watch care over the transmission of his Word, the genuine text has been "kept pure" in the multitude of copies. The doctrine of inerrancy, then, applies in the strictest sense only to the *autographa*. But it also applies in a derivative sense to the *apographa*, because we have the *autographa* within the *apographa*.

It should not surprise us that God has kept his Word pure throughout the ages, or that the present day copies which we possess are so accurate. The Bible itself affirms the perpetuity of God's Word. Psalm 119 (verses 89, 152, 160), for example, declares that the Word has been founded forever; it is eternal truth which will not fade away. Isaiah 40:8 states that "the Word of our God stands forever." Then too, Jesus claimed that "I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18).

The question arises: How are we to know which translation is the most accurate? As noted above, the controversy here is not over the Old, but the New Testament. Just in the last century there have been a number of new translations (e.g., ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, NKJV). And all of these except the New King James Version are based on a Greek text, known as the Alexandrian Text, that differs with the Greek underlying the King James Version, known as the Received Text, in over 5000 ways (9-12).

The new translations rely heavily on a handful of early Greek manuscripts that were discovered in Egypt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort promulgated the theory that these documents are to be favored, primarily due to their greater age. And yet, even among these few manuscripts, there are a number of differences.

The Westcott-Hort theory further maintains that the great bulk of Greek manuscripts (between 80 and 90 percent), represented by the Received Text, which, unlike the Alexandrian Text, are in substantial agreement, underwent a radical editing process in the fourth century; therefore, they are unreliable. Other studies have shown that this is not the case. As a matter of fact, there

is evidence to show that the Alexandrian manuscripts were the ones tampered with, and these deliberate changes are the reason that the documents are so dissimilar.²

Another group of New Testament scholars, with which Gordon Clark is in agreement (9-12), avers that the majority of manuscripts are to be preferred over the older documents. This is referred to as the Majority Text, the Byzantine Text, or the Traditional Text theory. The Received Text belongs to the manuscripts of the Majority Text, but it is not perfectly identical with it.

According to the Westcott-Hort theory, manuscripts are to be weighed, not numbered. After all, it is alleged, all of the Majority Text manuscripts came from one related family. Hence, say Westcott-Hort, "number is less important than weight" (15). According to the Traditional Text theory, on the other hand, greater age is not nearly as important as number. First, one text being older than another in no way implies that it is superior. The older text itself could be errant. Too, the weight of textual evidence now reveals that the Majority Text manuscripts go back at least to the time of the older texts (13-16).

Second, if a number of similar manuscripts have a single ancestor, as is alleged to be the case with the Majority Text, it does not necessarily mean that the greater number carries little weight. It may well imply that the copyists of that day believed that ancestor to be the one most faithful to the original. The manuscripts which are fewer in number were in all probability rejected by copyists; their scarcity indicates their corrupt nature (13-16). Dr. Clark correctly asserts that the fact that the "number of manuscripts of the type underlying the King James Version far exceeds all other types combined...would seem to be conclusive for the Byzantine Text" (15).

Third, the church used the Majority Text for over 1000 years prior to the Reformation. The churches of the Reformation used the same text for another 350 years (and some continue to use

² See Wilbur N. Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1977), 58-62, 107-110.

it). If the scholars who have followed Westcott-Hort are correct, then the church in many cases, has been without the Word of God for nearly 1500 years (v). This does not indicate that the New Testament text has by God's "singular care and providence [been] kept pure in all ages."

What we are discussing here is no small matter. We are dealing with the very Word of God itself. It is not enough that the translations be accurate; the Greek text underlying the translations must

also be accurate. As Gordon Clark concludes: "the type of criticism underlying the Revised Standard Version, the New American Standard, and other versions is inconsistent....Its method is that of unsupported aesthetic speculation. If we want to get closer to the very words of God, we must pay attention to the [Majority Text theory of the King James and] New King James Versions" (49). ☞

Review of "Logic" by Clark

A Book Review of Gordon H. Clark's *Logic* (The Trinity Foundation, 1998) 140 pages.

Reviewed by W. Gary Crampton, Th.D.



In the "Introduction" to this book, John Robbins asks the most pertinent question, "Why Study Logic?" Logic, which is defined as "the science of necessary inference," is often belittled as unnecessary. After all, we are told, "life is deeper than logic; life is green, but logic is gray and lifeless." Why then should we spend our time studying logic? Could we not better involve ourselves in something "more spiritual?"

In his *Logic*,¹ Gordon Clark, who taught the subject for years at the college and seminary level, instructs his readers about "the science of necessary inference." *Logic* is a text book, and it is classic. In it Dr. Clark defines and deals with Informal Fallacies, Syllogisms, Sorites and other forms of Argument, Truth Tables, etc. All of the chapters are, in typical Clarkian fashion, systematic, and extremely well presented. But the most important thing the author does in the book under review is answer the question "Why Study Logic?"

In the "Postscript," and elsewhere,² Dr. Clark presents a biblical view of logic. First, the Bible teaches that the Triune God is a God of

knowledge, who is also the source and determiner of all truth. That which is true is true because God thinks it so. And since that which is not rational cannot be true (1 Timothy 6:20), it follows that God is rational, and the laws of logic are the way he thinks.

This is, of course, what the Bible teaches. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33); he is a rational being, the Lord God of truth (Psalm 31:5). So much does the Bible speak of God as a God of logic, that in John 1:1 Jesus Christ is called the "Logic" of God: "In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God" (the English word "logic" is derived from the Greek *logos* used in this verse). John 1:1 emphasizes the rationality of God the Son. Logic is as eternal as God himself because "the *Logos* is God." Hence, God and logic cannot be separated; logic is the characteristic of God's thinking. So God and logic are one and the same first principle.

This should give us a greater understanding of the relationship of logic and Scripture. Since Logic is God, and since Scripture is a part of "the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16), it follows that Scripture must be logical. What is said in Scripture is God's infallible and inerrant thought. It expresses the mind of God because God and

¹ Gordon H. Clark, *Logic* (The Trinity Foundation, 1985, 1998).

² Gordon H. Clark, "God and Logic," *The Trinity Review* (November/December 1980).

his Word are one. This being the case, the Bible is a logically consistent book.

Further, logic is embedded in Scripture. The very first verse of the Bible, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” necessitates the validity of the most fundamental law of logic: the law of contradiction (A is not non-A). Genesis 1:1 teaches that God is the Creator of all things. Too, it says that he created “in the beginning.” It does not teach, therefore, that God is not the Creator of all things, nor does it maintain that God created all things 100 years after the beginning. The verse assumes that the words God, beginning, created, and so forth, all have definite meanings. It also assumes that they do not mean certain things. For speech to be intelligible, words must have univocal meanings. What makes the words meaningful, and revelation and communication possible, is that each word conforms to the law of contradiction.

This most fundamental law of logic cannot be proved. For any attempt to prove the law of contradiction would presuppose the truth of the law and therefore beg the question. Simply put, it is not possible to reason without using the law of contradiction. In this sense, the laws of logic are axiomatic. But they are only axiomatic because they are fixed or embedded in the Word of God.

Also fixed in Scripture are the two other principle laws of logic: the law of identity (A is A), and the law of the excluded middle (A is either B or non-B). The former is taught in Exodus 3:14, in the name of God itself: “I AM WHO I AM.” And the latter is found, for example, in the words of Christ: “He who is not with me is against me” (Luke 11:23).

Logic, then, is embedded in Scripture. This is why Scripture, rather than the laws of logic, is selected as the axiomatic starting point of Christian epistemology. Similarly, God is not made the axiom, because all of our knowledge of God comes from Scripture. “God,” as an axiom, without Scripture, is merely a name. Scripture as the axiom defines God.

As we are taught in the Bible, man is the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27). God “formed man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils

the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). Adam became a type of soul that is superior to that of non-rational animals (2 Peter 2:12). Man, as God’s image bearer, is a rational being (Colossians 3:10). This is why the apostle Paul could spend time “reasoning” with his auditors “from the Scriptures” (Acts 17:2).

Moreover, because Christ is the *Logos* who “gives [epistemological] light to every man who comes into the world” (John 1:9), we are to understand that there is a point at which man’s logic meets God’s logic. In fact, John 1:9 denies that logic is arbitrary; it also denies polylogism, i.e., that there may be many kinds of logic. According to John, there is only one kind of logic: God’s logic. And the *Logos* gives to every image bearer of God the ability to think logically.

Man, then, has the capacity to think logically and to communicate with God. God created Adam with a mind structured in a manner similar to his own. In the Scripture, God has given man an intelligible message, “words of truth and reason” (Acts 26:25). God has also given man language that enables him to rationally converse with his Creator (Exodus 4:11). Such thought and conversation would not be possible without the laws of logic. Logic is indispensable to all (God-given) human thought and speech. This being so, we must insist that there is no “mere human logic” as contrasted with a divine logic. Such fallacious thinking does disservice to the *Logos* of God himself.

One might argue here that the fall of man rendered logic defective. But this is not the case. The noetic effects of sin indeed hinder man’s ability to reason correctly (Romans 1:21), but this in no way implies that the laws of logic themselves are impinged. In other words, it is not the laws of logic that are affected by the Fall, it is man’s ability to think logically that is so affected. As we have seen, the laws of logic are eternally fixed in the mind of God. They cannot be affected; they are eternally valid. Logic is fixed and universal; it is necessary and irreplaceable.

Conclusion: Why should we study logic? First, because we are commanded by Scripture to do so. Second, as taught by the Westminster

Confession of Faith (I:6), all things necessary for our faith and life are either expressly set down in Scripture, or can be logically deduced from Scripture. Logic then is indispensable to the study of the Word of God. And third, logic is not only indispensable to the study of theology, it is necessary for our study of all subjects. In the words of Augustine: “The science of reasoning is

of very great service in searching into and unraveling all sorts of questions that come up in Scripture....The validity of logical sequences is not a thing devised by men, but it is observed and noted by them that they may be able to learn and teach it; for it exists eternally in the reason of things, and has its origin with God.” ☞

Keeping a Father’s Commandment

The text for this sermon has been transcribed and edited from: **Domestic Duties 23: Keeping a Father’s Commandment**, preached on December 24, 1995. See the advertisement on page 35 for these sermon tapes.

By Richard Bacon.



It is necessary in our study of well ordered families for us to speak not only to husbands and wives, not only to fathers and mothers, but also to children. In Proverbs 6:20-21, Solomon spoke to one he repeatedly called, “My son.” He said, “My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.” The word here means to tie the commandments about the neck as an amulet or as an ornament. I wonder if sometimes our children do not regard the commandments of the Lord as they receive them from their parents, not as a beautiful ornament, but rather as a yoke which is difficult to bear. Children do often think of their parents’ requirements as a great burden. Therefore we must speak also to children, because, children, the Bible does speak specifically to you.

I realize that it is sometimes difficult for children to sit quietly and listen to God’s word. But Jesus told a story about birds that came around wherever there were seeds being sown, and plucked the seeds out of the ground and ate them. Jesus said that very thing also happens when the word of God is being preached in our presence: Satan’s birds simply come and pluck it out of our hearts if they can. I do not want that to happen to any of you children here. I love you too much to want to see that happen. Therefore, I

want you to listen. I want you to pay close attention. Do not allow the Devil’s birds to pluck the seed — the word of God — out of your hearts.

In Proverbs 6:20-22, there is a significant request that Solomon made of the one he called, “My Son.” There he said, “Keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.” In order for the law of God to be able to keep us, to guard us, to talk to us, and to lead us, we have to have it *with* us. We have to *know* God’s commandments to be able to *keep* them.

There are various warnings in the passage that leads up to these three verses. Let us examine the warnings because I believe that there is a tendency for us as God’s covenant people to surrender to complacency. We often regard God’s covenant as placing no particular burden upon us. But in fact, by being born into covenant families, we have a great burden, rather a great responsibility, placed upon us. By virtue of our covenantal relationship to the church and by virtue of our baptism we have not only certain high privileges that accrue to us as members of the covenantal community, but we also have responsibilities that accrue to us as well.

In verses 1 through 5, Solomon was eager that his son *not keep bad company*. “My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth.” In Proverbs 13:20, Solomon warned, “The companion of fools shall be destroyed.” Children, it is important for us to choose our friends well. I know that there is a tendency for us to think that because we have a covenant background, because we go to a Christian school, because we come from a Christian home, or because we attend a Reformed church, therefore we will be a good influence on all our evil friends. That is not always true. You will not necessarily be a good influence on your evil friends; but your evil friends will be an influence upon you. The Bible warns covenant children repeatedly to choose their friends carefully. Children, remember this. If we choose the wrong friends, if we choose friends among those who are on their way to destruction, and if we walk with them, we are walking toward destruction as well.

What advice did Solomon give here in verse 5? He urged his readers to “deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.” Run away! Do not keep company with evil friends. Deliver yourself from the companionship of wicked people.

In verses 6 through 11, Solomon warned his son about *being a sluggard*. He said, “Go to the ant; ... Consider her ways, and be wise.” The ant does not need someone always standing over her, telling her what to do every moment of every day. She *looks* for work; she is able to *find* work; she *does* good work. She provides meat for the future. Solomon asked in verses 9 and 10, “How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.” What will come upon you if you avoid work? Will you find an easy life? No. You will find poverty! There is no surer way of becoming poor than by doing nothing at all.

In verses 12 through 15, Solomon warned his son about *lies and deceptions*. Solomon described a person who had become so skilled at lying that his entire life was a lie. Solomon began in verse

12 by calling him a “naughty person.” That is the man of Belial. In 2 Corinthians 6:15 Paul asked, “What concord hath Christ with Belial?” That is the same word that we have translated here “naughty.” He is a man of Belial, a man who has no thought of Christ in his heart. He is a wicked man and he walks with a crooked mouth. This is the standard Hebrew word here for “walk.” As he goes around, as he walks around, he tells lies. He deceives people. It is his purpose as he speaks to plant deception in the hearts of others. Not only does he lie with his mouth, however, he also lies with his eyes, with his feet and with his fingers. As he winks the eye, as he shuffles the feet, as he points with the finger, every gesture of his life is a lie. He, who had begun to spin a web of deceit, becomes trapped in the web himself. Soon everything that he does is controlled by his lies. He becomes like that man in the iron cage at the Interpreter’s house of whom Bunyan spoke in *Pilgrim’s Progress*. He was a man trapped by his own lies, unable to escape an iron cage of his own making. Was the man’s interpretation of himself correct? I do not know. The Interpreter told Christian, “Ask him.” And the man said, “What I once was, I am now no more.”

Children, give heed to the warnings of God. Do not be like Eli’s sons. Do not be like Samuel’s sons. They were children who grew up with every covenant privilege and yet fell away at last. Children, do not let that happen to you! Do not forsake your father’s commandments!

There is an interconnectedness — a progression — in such a shameful life. A person who begins simply with bad companions, moves on to becoming a sluggard. Then he has no care about duties and responsibilities. Finally his entire life becomes a lie. Solomon moved forward yet one more step, and showed that such a child’s entire life becomes corrupted by the lie he has been forced to live. Proverbs 6:16-19, “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.” This is the context, the background, against which Solomon warned his

son, “Keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.”

Verse 27 warns of youthful lusts which follow an unholy life. Solomon asked, “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?” Neither can a man lust after a woman, and still be innocent.

You see, children, there are certain commands to covenant children. There are promises of blessings in the way of obedience. There are also warnings of destruction in the way of disobedience. Lord’s Day after Lord’s Day, I ask myself, “Have I made the teaching plain? Have I made it clear? Have I set it out where you, the children, can understand?” Children, if you live within the church until your dying day, and if you live to be 70 years old, and if you hear two sermons each Lord’s Day for those seventy years, you will have heard 7,000 sermons in your life. As you grow up in a Reformed church, as you hear the word of God preached Lord’s Day upon Lord’s Day, the seed is planted. Lord’s Day after Lord’s Day, the seed is scattered upon your heart. Will you let the birds steal it? Will you let them take your birthright from you? What does it take for the birds to steal the truth from your heart? According to Bunyan’s man in the iron cage all it took was *carelessness*. He had become captive of his lies. The man in the iron cage said that those things that were intended to him as blessings now *bit* him day by day. Children, listen! Heed the warning! Keep on the true course! Do not forsake the commandments of your father!

God has given specific commandments to covenant children. God also makes specific promises to those who follow God and keep those commandments. We should regard both.

I. Commandments to Covenant Children.

In every covenantal relationship there is a specific aspect that characterizes the relationship in some way. The characterization of a parent’s relationship to a child is that of *nurture* and *admonishment*; he is to raise up a child. The relationship that a child should have to his parent is characterized primarily by *obedience*. In some portions of Scripture that obedience is

referred to as *honor*. That is the first commandment that you must recognize from God. It is the fifth commandment in order, but it is the first one that children must recognize in their relationship to their parents. The fifth commandment is the foundation for the entire relationship between a child and his parents. A child is *commanded* to honor and obey his parents.

Exodus 20:12, “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” In this verse, God promises the children of the covenant that if they honor their parents their lives shall be long in the land. In Ephesians 6:2, Paul reminded us that the fifth commandment is the first commandment *with promise*. In Hebrews 12:9, we are told to “reverence” our parents. Actually it is not so much a command in this passage as the apostle tells us that it is only natural that a child will reverence his parents. God has placed reverence toward his own parents in the heart of a child just as he placed love for his own children in the heart of a parent.

The first commandment with which covenantal children must concern themselves is to honour, to love and to obey their parents.

You have responsibilities as well. In the first verses of Ephesians we see that the book is addressed to the faithful in Christ Jesus and then in chapter 6, Paul specifically talks to the children of the church. The children of the covenant have a responsibility to be faithful in Christ Jesus. Children, we must not, we cannot, shirk that responsibility.

Leviticus 19:3, “Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.” There is a responsibility not only to honour, love and obey, but to fear, i.e. *to reverence*, our mother and our father and to keep the Sabbath. In verse 32, we are told, “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.” These passages teach that there is a necessity for children to show reverence and respect for their elders. There was a time when that was just considered a part of the way children were raised. In the past, children were

raised with a respect for their elders. I fear with all the other ungodliness and lawbreaking and antinomianism that we have in our society, even that respect for elders has fallen by the wayside. That too has become a relic of the past. Children of the past stood up in a classroom as a sign of respect when the teacher entered. The children today shoot the teacher. There were possibly more instances of children bringing guns into schools in this country last year than there were of them rising up “before the hoary head.” We live in a society in which children are not expected to stand up in the presence of their elders. They are not expected to show respect. One of the results of this lack of respect is the need to have metal detectors in the public schools to keep the weapons out.

These things are not happening without cause. These things are coming upon this country because we have refused to keep God’s commandments. We have neglected and contemned the word of the Lord. Because we have done these things, the public schools are full of violence.

In Psalm 119:9, King David asked “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” He answered his own question, “By taking heed thereto according to thy word.” Children, it is necessary, it is needful, that we know the word of God, even as young children. It is necessary for you to study Scriptures. It is necessary for you to begin to pray. How soon should a child learn to pray? As soon as the child can conceive prayer.

Psalm 148:12-13, “Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.” How old should you be before you begin singing God’s praise? How old should you be before you beginning memorizing God’s Psalms? You should be learning God’s Word in the crib, even from the womb. There is no age too early to have the praise of God upon our lips. Children, as well as old men; children, as well as the maiden, are required to praise the name of the Lord. All are called to praise the Lord for his goodness. To do that we must know something about who God is.

We could spend much more time studying the first seven chapters of the book of Proverbs. The young child whom Solomon called “my son,” is called upon to keep God’s commandments. There is no verse in the Bible that teaches anything about an age of accountability. We become accountable at the moment of conception. Therefore early on — at a young age — Solomon required of his son in Proverbs 3:1, “Forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments.” It is not enough to obey God, we must obey him *promptly* and we must obey him *cheerfully*. We have to obey him from the *heart*. We cannot be like the rebellious child who was required to sit down. He sat down but said, “I may be sitting down on the outside, but I am standing up on the inside.” That is not the kind of obedience that God requires of us. The kind of obedience that God requires of us is cheerful, prompt and universal obedience. As soon as we learn what God’s requirements are, we should set out to obey them.

Lamentations 3:27-29, “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.” Jeremiah explained that it is good for us to learn how to deal with afflictions early in life. God requires of us, early on, to learn how to deal with affliction.

John Bunyan wrote of Christian at the house of the Interpreter. In that house, two twins were sitting side by side, one named Patience and the one named Passion. Passion had never learned to bridle himself. He had never learned self control. When any temptation came along, he would be angered. Whenever the first reward came along, he grabbed at it, regardless of its source. But Patience sat waiting until the last. The Interpreter explained that he who receives early will have it taken away to give to the next, and then it will be taken away from that one to give to the next, and so on. But he who receives last receives permanently. That is what “lasts” means. Jesus taught that many who are last, shall be first in the kingdom. A child early in life must learn patience. It is one of the hardest lessons to learn. We go through our entire life trying to learn that lesson. How much better it would be for us to

learn it in our youth! As Jeremiah here reminds us in Lamentations that it is good for a man to bear a yoke in his youth, because he puts his “mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.”

In Deuteronomy 30:2, our children are required to *obey* God. In Proverbs 24:21, they are told to *fear* God. In Ecclesiastes 12:1, Solomon said, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” At the very beginning of the book of Proverbs, as Solomon began to speak to that one he called “my son,” he reminded him that it requires diligence to serve the Lord. In Proverbs 1:8-14, Solomon warned, “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit. ... Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse.” Hear Solomon’s advice: “Just say no!” In verse 15 his advice is, “My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path.” Do not take that first step! Attend diligently upon your parents’ teaching.

God made Adam as an adult. He could make all of us out of the dust. He has the power to do that. Yet God has chosen for his glory and our good rather than being made as an adult from the dust, as was Adam, each one of us would be raised by earthly parents. God has intended that for our good. If we harken to our parents, it is for our good. But, children, if we do not harken to our parents, when they remind us repeatedly... If we do not harken to our pastor, when he reminds us repeatedly... I fear that like Bunyan’s man in the iron cage, these things shall all come up later and bite us. They shall rise up in the judgment to testify against us. “He sinned against the light!”

II. Promises to children who follow God

God made promises to those who follow him. We saw that Paul characterized the fifth commandment as the first commandment with promise. That promise is to live long and prosper. That is the promise! If you want to live long and prosper, children, obey your parents. In Exodus

20:12, at the very giving of the fifth commandment, there was a promise that those who keep that commandment shall live long upon the earth. If we forget not the law of our father, if we forsake not the law of our mother, listen to what God promises to us. Proverbs 3:4, “So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” Would you like to find favour? Would you like to find understanding? Would you like to find grace? Then diligently attend upon God’s word. Listen to your parents and to those who stand in the place of your parents.

Two verses later, in verse 6 the Bible tells us, “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Children, how many of you would like a small child telling you what to do all the time? Is that a good idea? No, but that is what *you* often do. You let a child *exactly your age* tell you what to do when *you* direct your own path. Is that wise? No, it is much wiser to have someone who has walked with the Lord for a number of years telling you what to do. Which makes more sense? It simply makes more sense to have a person with experience, with knowledge, with wisdom, and with understanding helping us to direct our paths. That is exactly why God gave you parents. They have been through it. They have been where you are right now. They know most of the temptations that you are facing. God gave godly parents as a gift to you. You should make good use of that gift.

Proverbs 3:6, “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” That does not mean you are going to have visions in the middle of the night telling you what to do. It means that if keep the law of your father and forsake not the law of your mother, and if in all your ways you acknowledge God, then he will direct your path by *those very means*. This is not magic! This is the ordinary way of God’s grace.

Proverbs 3: 9 - 10, “Honour the LORD with thy substance ... so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” Live long and prosper! Do what your parents say! Follow their advice! Listen to their admonitions! Submit to their corrections!

Proverbs 8:17, “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early” [that is early in life, not just early in the day] “shall find me.” God promises that if you seek him early in life, you will find him. What a *precious* promise! What would the man in the iron cage have given in exchange for that promise? Sadly, that was the biggest part of his problem — he did not value God’s promises.

Proverbs 8: 32-36, “Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.” God is setting before you life or death. If you would choose death, all you have to do is hate God’s ways. If you would choose life, then you must choose God’s ways.

You might say, “But I do not hate God. I do not hate his ways. I do not hate the things of the Lord. Here I am at church with my parents and they did not even have to wake me up this morning. I was already awake!” If the Lord has so moved in your heart that is good. But I want to teach you something about what it means to hate something.

Turn with me to Genesis 29. This is part of the story of Jacob. Jacob was tricked by Laban. He had worked seven years for Rachel, but then on his wedding night, it turned out to be Leah that he had married. He still wanted to marry Rachel. Genesis 29:30-31, “And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah.” What was his relationship to Leah? He simply loved Rachel more. But look how God characterized Jacob’s relationship with Leah. “And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated...” Children, all you have to do is think less of God’s ways than you ought to, all you need to do is think lowly of God’s commandments, all you have to do is resist correction, and by God’s standards, that is hatred of his ways.

Wisdom cries out, “All they that hate me, love death.” Do we have to grind our teeth against

wisdom to hate it? No! All we have to do is think more lowly of it than we ought. All we have to do is *ignore* the fact that the birds are plucking the seed out of our hearts to end up like the man in the iron cage. He cries that he is no longer what he once was.

There is a promise of life versus death for those who love God; for those who keep his commandments.

In Proverbs 23:15-16, there is a promise also. God says through Solomon, “My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.” Children, do you want to make your parents glad? God promises that if you keep his commandments, it will cause your parents to rejoice. It will make your parents proud of you. It will make them happy.

Look at verses 24-25, “The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.”

Is that the relationship we want to have with our father and mother? Of course it is! And therefore, we keep our father’s commandments and we forsake not the law of our mother, because we want our parents to rejoice and we want them to be proud of us.

In Isaiah 40:11, we are promised that those who are the lambs of God will be gathered by the shepherd. Isaiah 54:13, “All thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.” We are promised that those children who keep God’s commandments shall be taught by the Lord.

Children, if we want the blessing of Christ; if we want wisdom; if we want our parents to rejoice; if we want life; if we want long life; if we want prosperity; if we want our lives to count; then remember the admonition from Proverbs. What is the requirement? What is the commandment? The commandment is “keep the law of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother.” ☞

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Volume 10 Number 3 — July / September 2001

The First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett

The Blue Banner is published by The First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas (Reformation Presbyterian Church). **Session:** Pastor Richard Bacon. Ruling Elders: David Seekamp, Carl Betsch, Thomas Allie.

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Worship Services: 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM on each Lord's Day. Visitors are welcome to stay for **lunch** between the two services. **Biblical Institutes:** 4:00 PM.

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett meets at 8210 Schrade Road, Rowlett, TX. From Interstate 30, take exit 64 north on Dalrock Road. From the Diamond Shamrock gas station, go 1.5 miles north to Schrade Road. Turn left and go approximately 1/4 mile. We are in the first building on the left. Parking is in the rear of the building.

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