

THE BLUE BANNER

Volume 10, Issue 4

For Christ's Crown & Covenant

October/December 2001

CONTENTS

- 1 *In this Issue*
- 2 *Review: James Durham's Sermons on Isaiah 53.*
- 3 *A "Christmas" Sermon*
- 12 *Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ*
- 13 *Family Reformation Promoted by Daniel Cawdrey*
- 24 *WSC Cards; Domestic Duties*
- 24 *Justifying Many by Richard Bacon*
- 31 *Tapes, etc.*
- 32 *Comprehensive Psalter*
- 33 *Myanmar Report; Tapes*
- 34 *Importance of Education for Covenant Children*
- 36 *Order Form. About The Blue Banner & FPCR*

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In this Issue.

A "Christmas" Sermon by Samuel Davies Family Reformation
 Promoted by Daniel Cawdrey Justifying Many by Richard Bacon

by Richard Bacon



Some of *The Blue Banner's* longtime readers will be surprised to learn that we have included such a thing as a "Christmas-Day" sermon in our pages. Please read on before judging us backslidden. The editorial stance of this newsletter against such celebrations is quite well known — and that stance has not changed.

However, it seems to us that every year we receive the same question: "Are you saying that it is unlawful to preach on the incarnation on or near December 25th?" Beloved reader, it is never unseasonable to preach of the incarnation of Christ. The sermon by the Rev. Samuel Davies is an intelligent and pious attempt to do exactly that. As Davies so well says, "To remember and religiously improve [*make use of*] the incarnation of our divine Redeemer, to join the concert of angels, and dwell in ecstatic meditation upon their song; this is lawful, this is a seasonable duty every day; and consequently upon this day."

Yet in order to keep things in their proper perspective, Davies spends the first several pages of his sermon warning against the keeping of Romish holy days, including the one commonly called "Christmas-Day." Thus, in the interest of fair warning to superstitious men, it seems that preaching on the historical events surrounding Christ's birth — if such preaching takes place on or near the 25th of December — should be accompanied with the friendly reminder that there is no biblical support for such an *annual* observance.

Samuel Davis was, in great measure, the spiritual "father" of Southern Presbyterianism. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers:" (1 Corinthians 4:15a). Davies was first settled in Hanover County, VA in 1747-48 by the New Castle Presbytery as an evangelist to that county. Davies' call was signed by about 150 residents of Hanover and Henrico counties. (Continued on Page 2).

Seven years later, in 1755, the first southern presbytery was formed in Hanover County — based upon the work of Davies. In that year a man in nearby Richmond County wrote, “When I go amongst Mr. Davies’ people, religion seems to flourish; it is like the suburbs of heaven.”

So perhaps the following sermon by Mr. Davies will take you beyond heaven’s suburbs, to her very gateposts. Davies was called to heaven’s realm in 1761 at the age of 37. During an earlier illness in 1757 Davies wrote, “After long trial I found this world a place so unfriendly to the growth of everything divine and heavenly, that I was afraid if I should live any longer, I should be no better fitted for heaven than I am. Indeed I have hardly any hopes of ever making any great attainment in holiness while in this world,

though I should be doomed to stay in it as long as Methuselah.” Davies was not so long in this world, but his shadow has been cast over 250 years of Southern Presbyterianism.

In addition to a sermon by Dr. Bacon from his series on Justification by Faith, there is also in this issue a portion of a work by Westminster Divine, Daniel Cawdrey, entitled *Family Reformation Promoted*. The sermon originally appeared along with a catechism on family duties and relations, in the Naphtali Press Anthology series (volume 4). Cawdrey was an English Presbyterian and authored many works as well as co-authoring with fellow Westminster Divine Herbert Palmer, *Sabbath Redivivum*, perhaps the finest Puritan defense of the Christian Sabbath.



Book Review: The Marrow of the Gospel

Book Review: The Marrow of the Gospel in 72 Sermons on the Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah by James Durham.
Naphtali Press. 704 pages. \$75.00. Presently available at a discounted price from the publisher.

By Richard Bacon

James Durham, *The Marrow of the Gospel in seventy-two Sermons on the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah* (Dallas: Naphtali Press, 2001) 704 pages, size: 8x10, hard bound. \$75.00. Table of Contents, Editor's Preface, Life of the Author, Original Dedication & To the Reader by John Carstairs (68 pages), 72 sermon on Isaiah 53 (71-678), Glossary, Subject & Scripture Index (681-704).

Naphtali Press continues its 17th Century Presbyterian series with the publication of a new edition of James Durham’s, *The Marrow of the Gospel*, etc.. This large book is bound similarly to the others in the series (*English Popish Ceremonies* by George Gillespie, *Lectures on Job* by Durham, and *The Divine Right of Church Government* by sundry ministers of London). It has a three piece binding (with a change in front and back cover material for longer wear), is Smyth sewn, and is printed on acid free paper. However, it will not quite match the other books on your shelf. This newest Durham title is a bit taller, and lacks the grey dust cover of the previous volumes.

There is an extensive outline of the contents of the sermons, in the place that one would expect a simple table of contents. It is quite useful, especially after you have read the sermons and cannot quite remember where Durham discussed a particular topic. Side heads in the text of the sermons themselves are also helpful and match the outline from the Contents.


There is a subject index and a complete index of the scripture references. With modern computer software there is no reason for a book not to have at the very least a Scripture index.

There are also footnotes explaining such things as the place in the sermon outlines, definitions of obscure Scottish words, critical notes about the text, and other editorial comments. See the Naphtali Press website for more details about this great new title and to see samples from the book at www.naphtali.com. Or write Naphtali Press at P O Box 141084, Dallas, TX 75214 for details.☞

A “Christmas” Sermon

LUKE 2:13, 14 – And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will towards men.

By Samuel Davies.

 HIS is the day which the church of Rome, and some other churches that deserve to be placed in better company have agreed to celebrate in memory of the Prince of Peace, the Savior of men, the incarnate God, Immanuel. And I doubt not, but many convert superstition into rational and scriptural devotion, and religiously employ themselves in a manner acceptable to God, though they want the sanction of divine authority for appropriating this day to a sacred use. But, alas, it is generally a season of sinning, sensuality, luxury, and various forms of extravagance; as though men were not celebrating the birth of the holy Jesus, but of Venus, or Bacchus, whose most sacred rites were mysteries of iniquity and debauchery. The birth of Jesus was solemnized by armies of angels; they had their music and their songs on this occasion. But how different from those generally used among mortals’ “Glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, good will to men.” This was their song. But is the music and dancing, the feasting and rioting, the idle songs and extravagant mirth of mortals at this season, a proper echo or response to this angelic song? I leave you to your own reflections upon this subject, after I have given the hint; and I am sure, if they be natural and pertinent, and have a proper influence upon you, they will restrain you from running into the fashionable excesses of riot on this occasion. To remember and religiously improve the incarnation of our divine Redeemer, to join the concert of angels, and dwell in ecstatic meditation upon their song; this is lawful, this is a seasonable duty every day; and consequently upon this day. And as Jesus improved the feast of dedication, though not of divine institution, as a proper opportunity to exercise his ministry, when crowds of the Jews were gathered from all

parts; so I would improve this day for your instruction, since it is the custom of our country to spend it religiously, or idly, or wickedly, as different persons are differently disposed. But as the seed of superstition which have some times grown up to a prodigious height, have been frequently sown and cherished by very inconsiderable incidents, I think it proper to inform you, that I may guard against this danger, that I do not set apart this day for public worship, as though it had any peculiar sanctity, or we were under any obligations to keep it religiously. I know no human authority, that has power to make one day more holy than another, or that can bind the conscience in such cases. And as for divine authority, to which alone the sanctifying of days and things belongs, it has thought it sufficient to consecrate one day in seven to a religious use, for the commemoration both of the birth of this world, and the resurrection of its great Author, or of the works of creation and redemption. This I would religiously observe; and inculcate the religious observance of it upon all. But as to other days, consecrated by the mistaken piety or superstition of men, and conveyed down to us as holy, through the corrupt medium of human tradition, I think myself free to observe them or not, according to convenience, and the prospect of usefulness; like other common days, on which I may lawfully carry on public worship or not, as circumstances require. And since I have so fair an opportunity, and it seems necessary in order to prevent my conduct from being a confirmation of present superstition, or a temptation to future, I shall, once for all, declare my sentiments more fully upon this head.

But I must premise, that it is far from my design, to widen the differences subsisting among Christians, to embitter their hearts against each

other, or to awaken dormant controversies concerning the extra-essentials of religion. And if this use should be made of what I shall say, it will be an unnatural perversion of my design. I would make every candid concession in favor of those who observe days of human institution that can consist with truth and my own liberty. I grant, that so many plausible things may be offered for the practice, as may have the appearance of solid argument, even to honest inquirers after truth. I grant, that I doubt not but many are offering up acceptable devotion to God on this day; devotion proceeding from honest, believing hearts, and therefore acceptable to him on any day — acceptable to him, notwithstanding their little mistake in this affair. I grant, we should, in this case, imitate the generous candor and forbearance of St. Paul, in a similar case. The converts to Christianity from among the Jews, long retained the prejudices of their education, and thought they were still obliged, even under the gospel dispensation, to observe the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, to which they had been accustomed, and particularly those days which were appointed by God to be religiously kept under the Jewish dispensation. The Gentile converts, on the other hand, who were free from these early prejudices of education and custom, and had imbibed more just notions of Christian liberty, looked upon these Jewish holy-days as common days, and no longer to be observed. This occasioned a warm dispute between these two classes of converts, and St. Paul interposes, not so properly to determine which party was right, (that was comparatively a small matter), as to bring both parties to exercise moderation and forbearance towards each other, and to put a charitable construction upon their different practices in these little articles; and particularly to believe concerning each other, that though their practices were different, yet the principle from which they acted was the same, namely, a sincere desire to glorify and please God, and a conscientious regard to what they apprehended was his will — “Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations — one man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. He that

regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it,” Rom. 14:1, 5-6; that is, it is a conscientious regard to the Lord, that is the principle upon which both parties act, though they act differently in this matter. Therefore, says the apostle, “Why dost thou judge thy brother?” why dost thou severely censure him for practicing differently in this little affair? “Hast thou faith?” says he — hast thou a full persuasion of what is right in these punctilios and ceremonials? Then, “have it to thyself before God;” verse 22. Keep it to thyself as a rule for thy own practice, but do not impose it upon others, nor disturb the church of Christ about it. It becomes us, my brethren, to imitate this catholicism and charity of the apostle, in these little differences; and God forbid I should tempt any of you to forsake so noble an example. But then the example of the same apostle will authorize us modestly to propose our own sentiments and the reasons of our practice, and to warn people from laying a great stress upon ceremonials and superstitious observances. This he does particularly to the Galatians, who not only kept the Jewish holy-days, but placed a great part of their religion in the observance of them. “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years;” therefore, says he, “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain” (Gal. 4:10-11). The commandments of God have often been made void by the traditions of men; and human inventions more religiously observed than divine institutions; and when this was the case, St. Paul was warm in opposing even ceremonial mistakes. Having premised this, which I look upon as much more important than the decision of the question, I proceed to show you the reasons why I would not religiously observe days of human appointment, in commemoration of Christ and the saints. What I have to say shall be particularly pointed at what is called Christmas day: but may be easily applied to all other holy-days instituted by men.

The first reason I shall offer is, that I would take my religion just as I find it in my Bible without any imaginary improvements or supplements of human invention. All the ordinances which God

has been pleased to appoint, and particularly that one day in seven, which he has set apart for his more immediate service, and the commemoration of the works of creation and redemption, I would honestly endeavor to observe in the most sacred manner. But when ignorant presuming mortals take upon them to refine upon Divine institutions, to make that a part of religion, which God has left indifferent, and consecrate more days than he has thought necessary; in short, when they would mingle something of their own with the pure religion of the Bible: then I must be excused from obedience, and beg leave to content myself with the old, plain, simple religion of the Bible. Now that there is not the least appearance in all the Bible of the Divine appointment of Christmas, to celebrate the birth of Christ, is granted by all parties; and the Divine authority is not so much as pretended for it. Therefore, a Bible-Christian is not at all bound to observe it.

Secondly, the Christian church, for at least three hundred years, did not observe any day in commemoration of the birth of Christ. For this we have the testimony of the primitive fathers themselves. Thus Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived about the year one hundred and ninety-four, "We are commanded to worship and honor him, who, we are persuaded, is the Word, and our Savior and Ruler, and through him, the Father; *not upon* certain particular or *select days*, as some others do, but constantly practicing this all our life, and in every proper way." Chrysostom, who lived in the fourth century, has these words, "It is not yet ten years, since this day, that is, Christmas, was plainly known to us;" and he observes, the custom was brought to Constantinople from Rome. Now since this day was not religiously observed in the church in the first and purest ages, but was introduced as superstitions increased, and Christianity began to degenerate very fast into popery; ought not we to imitate the purity of these primitive times, and retain none of the superstitious observances of more corrupt ages?

Thirdly, if a day should be religiously observed in memory of the birth of Christ, it ought to be that day on which he was born. But that day,

and even the month and the year, are altogether uncertain. The Scriptures do not determine this point of chronology. And perhaps they are silent on purpose, to prevent all temptation to the superstitious observance of it; just as the body of Moses was secretly buried, and his grave concealed, to guard the Israelites from the danger of idolizing it. Chronologers are also divided upon the point: and even the ancients are not agreed.¹ The learned generally suppose that Christ was born two or three years before the vulgar reckoning. And as to the month, some suppose it was in September, and some in June. And they imagine it was very unlikely, that he was born in the cold wintry months of December, because we read, that at the time of his birth, shepherds were out in the field, watching their flocks by night; which is not probable at that season of the year. The Christian epocha, or reckoning time from the birth of Christ, was not introduced till about the year five hundred; and it was not generally used till the reign of Charles the Great, about the year eight hundred, or a little above nine hundred years ago. And this must occasion a great uncertainty, both as to the year, month, and day. But why do I dwell so long upon this? It must be universally confessed, that the day of his birth is quite uncertain: nay, it is certain that it is not that which has been kept in commemoration of it. To convince you of this, I need only put you in mind of the late parliamentary correction of our computation of time by introducing the new-style; by which Christmas is eleven days sooner than it was wont to be. And yet this chronological blunder still continues in the public prayers of some, who give thanks to God, that Christ was born *as upon this day*. And while this prayer was offered up in England and Virginia on the twenty-fifth of

¹ Clemens Alexandrinus mentions the different opinions about it in his time, especially among the heretics; for as to the catholics, they pretended to determine nothing about it in his day. "There are some," says he, "who very curiously determine not only the year, but also the day of our Savior's birth, which they say is the 28th year of Augustus, and the 25th of the month Pachon. The followers of Basilides celebrate also the day of his baptism, and say, that is the 15th year of Tiberius, and the 15th of the month Tabi. But others say, it is the 11th of the same month. Some of them also say, that he was born on the 24th or 25th of Pharmouthi." But none of these computations fix it on the 25th of December.

December old-style, other countries that followed the new-style, were solemnly declaring in their thanksgivings to God, that Christ was born eleven days sooner; that is, on the fourteenth of December. I therefore conclude, that neither this day nor any other was ever intended to be observed for this purpose.

Finally, superstition is a very growing evil; and therefore the first beginnings of it ought to be prevented. Many things that were at first introduced with a pious design have grown up gradually into the most enormous superstition and idolatry in after ages. The ancient Christians, for example, had such a veneration for the pious martyrs, that they preserved a lock of hair, or some little memorial of them; and this laid the foundation for the expensive sale and stupid idolizing of the relics of the saints in popish countries. They also celebrated their memory, by observing the days of their martyrdom. But as the number of the martyrs and saints real or imaginary, increased, the saints' days also multiplied to an extravagant degree, and hardly left any days in the year for any other purpose. And as they had more saints than days in the year, they dedicated the first of November for them all, under the title of *All-saints-day*. But if the saints must be thus honored, then certainly much more ought Jesus Christ. This seemed a natural inference: and accordingly, these superstitious devotees appointed one day to celebrate his birth, another his baptism, another his death, another the day of Pentecost, and an endless list that I have not time now to mention. The apostles also must be put into the Calendar: and thus almost all the days in the year were consecrated by superstition, and hardly any left for the ordinary labors of life. Thus the people are taught to be idle the greatest part of their time, and so indisposed to labor on the few days that are still allowed them for that purpose. This has almost ruined some popish countries, particularly the Pope's dominions in the fine country of Italy, once the richest and best improved in the world. Mr. Addison, Bishop Burnet, and other travelers, inform us, that every thing bears the appearance of poverty, notwithstanding all the advantages of soil and

climate: and that this is chiefly owing to the superstition of the people, who spend the most of their time as holy-days. And if you look over the Calendar of the Church of England, you will find that the *festivals* in one year, amount to thirty-one. The *fasts* to no less than ninety-five, to which add the fifty-two Sundays in every year, and the whole will make one hundred and seventy-eight: so that only one hundred and eighty-seven days will be left in the whole year, for the common purposes of life. And whether the poor could procure a subsistence for themselves and their families by the labor of so few days, and whether it be not a yoke that neither we nor our fathers are able to bear, I leave you to judge. It is true, that but very few of these feasts and fasts are now observed, even by the members of the established church. But then they are still in their Calendar and Canons, and binding upon them by the authority of the church; and as far as they do not comply with them, so far they are *dissenters*: and in this, and in many other respects, they are *generally dissenters*, though they do not share with us in the infamy of the name. Now, since the beginnings of superstitious inventions in the worship of God are so dangerous in their issue, and may grow up into such enormous extravagance, we ought to shun the danger, by adhering to the simplicity of the Bible-religion, and not presume to make more days or things holy, than the all-wise God has been pleased to sanctify. He will be satisfied with the religious observance of his own institutions; and why should not we? It is certainly enough, that we be as religious as he requires us. And all our will-worship is liable to that confounding rejection, "Who hath required this at your hands?" (Isaiah 1:12).

I now proceed to what is more delightful and profitable, the sublime anthem of the angels: "Glory to God in the highest! on earth, peace! good will to men!"

What a happy night was this to the poor shepherds, though exposed to the damps and darkness of midnight, and keeping their painful watches in the open field. An illustrious angel, clothed in light which kindled midnight into

noon, came upon them, or suddenly hovered over them in the air, and the glory of the Lord, that is, a bright refulgent light, the usual emblem of his presence shone round about them. No wonder the poor shepherds were struck with horror, and overwhelmed at the sight of so glorious a phenomenon. But when God strikes his people with terror, it is often an introduction to some signal blessing. And they are sometimes made sore afraid, like the shepherds, even with the displays of his glories. The first appearance even of the great deliverer may seem like that of a great destroyer. But he will at length make himself known as he is, and allay the fears of his people. So the gentle angel cheers and supports the trembling shepherds, "Fear not," says he, you need not tremble, but rejoice at my appearance; "for *behold*," observe and wonder, "I *bring you*," from heaven, by order from its Sovereign, "*good tidings of great joy*," — the best that was ever published in mortal ears, not only to you, not only to a few private persons or families, not only to the Jewish nation; but good tidings of great joy, "*which shall be to all people*," to Gentiles as well as Jews, to all nations, tribes, and languages — to all the various ranks of men — to kings and subjects — to rich and poor; to free and bond: therefore let it circulate through the world, and resound from shore to shore. And what is this news that is introduced with so sublime and transporting a preface? It is this: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Unto *you* mortals — unto you miserable sinners, is born a *Savior* — a Savior from sin and ruin: a Savior of no mean or common character, but *Christ*, the promised Messiah, anointed with the Holy Spirit; and invested with the high office of Mediator; Christ the *Lord*, the Lord and ruler of heaven and earth, and universal nature. He is *born* — *no* longer represented by dark types and prophecies, but actually entered in the world — born *this day* — *the* long expected day is at length arrived; the prophecies are accomplished, and the fullness of time is come: — born *in the city of David*, in Bethlehem, and therefore of the seed and lineage of David, according to the prophecies: though he be a person of such eminence, *Christ the Lord* is now a feeble infant, just born. The Son born, and

the Child given, he is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

The condescension of the angel, and the joyful tidings he brought, no doubt recovered the shepherds from their consternation, and emboldened them to lift up their faces. And how was their joy heightened, that they were chosen and appointed by Heaven, to be the first visitants to this newborn Prince? "This shall be a sign to you," said the angel, by which you may know this divine Infant from others. What shall be the sign? Shall it be that they will find him in a palace, surrounded with all the grandeur and majesty of courts, and attended by the emperors, kings and nobles of the earth; lying in a bed of down, and dressed in silks, and gold, and jewels? This might be expected, if we consider the dignity of his person. It would be infinite condescension for him to be born even in such circumstances as these. But these are not the characteristics of the incarnate God: no, says the angel, this shall be a sign to you, "*ye shall find the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger*." LYING IN A MANGER (Luke 2:12). Astonishing! Who could expect the newborn Son of God to be there? — There, lying in straw, surrounded only with oxen and horses, and waited upon only by a feeble, solitary mother, far from home, among unkind, regardless strangers, who would not allow her room in the inn, even in her painful hour. Perhaps her poverty disabled her from bearing her expenses in the ordinary way; and therefore she must take up her lodging in a stable. In such circumstances of abasement did the Lord of glory enter our world. In these circumstances he was "*seen of angels*," 1 Timothy 3:16; who were wont to behold him in another form, in all the glories of the heavenly world. And how strange a sight must this be! How bright a display of his love to the guilty sons of men!

The angel, that was the willing messenger of these glad tidings, did not descend from heaven alone. He appears to have been the hierarch, or commandant of an army of angels, that attended him on this grand occasion. For suddenly there was with him a *multitude* of the heavenly host, or, as it might be rendered, of the *militia* or *soldiery*

of heaven. — The angels are not a confused irregular body, or unconnected independent individuals; but a well-disposed system of beings, with proper subordinations; all marshaled into ranks under proper commanders. Hence they are called “thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers;” Col. 1:16; and we read of angels and archangels; 1 Thess. 4:16; of Michael and his angels; Rev. 12:7. They are called in the military style, the Lord’s *hosts*; Psalm 103:21, 148:2; and the *army* of heaven; Dan. 4:35. Rev. 19:14; to signify the order established among them, and also their strength and unanimity to execute the commands of their sovereign, to repel the dragon and his angels, and defend the feeble heirs of salvation, on whom they condescend to wait. Order and subordination is still retained even among the fallen angels in the kingdom of darkness. Hence we read of the prince of the devils; Matt. 11:34; the dragon and his angels; Rev. 12:7; legions of devils; Mark 5:9; which was a division of the Roman army, something like that of a regiment among us.

Now a regiment of the heavenly militia descended with their officer, to solemnize and publish the birth of their Lord, when he took upon him our nature. And no sooner had their commander delivered his message, than they immediately join with one voice, filling all the air with their heavenly music; “praising God, and saying, ‘glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, good will to men.’” The language is abrupt, like that of a full heart: the sentences short, unconnected, and rapid; expressive of the ecstasy of their minds.

“*Glory to God in the highest!*” This deservedly leads the song. It is of more importance in itself, in the estimate of angels, and of all competent judges, than even the salvation of men. And the first and chief cause of joy and praise from the birth of a Savior is, that he shall bring glory to God. Through him, as a proper medium, the divine perfections shall shine forth with new, augmented splendor. Through him, sinners shall be saved in a way that will advance the honor of the divine perfections and government: or if any of them perish, their punishment will more

illustriously display the glory of their offended Sovereign. The *wisdom, grace, and mercy* of God, are glorified in the contrivance of this scheme of redemption, and making millions of miserable creatures happy forever. His *power* is glorified, in carrying this scheme into execution, in spite of all opposition. His *Justice* is glorified, in the atonement and satisfaction made for the sins of men by an incarnate Deity, and in the righteous and aggravated punishment executed upon those that obstinately reject this divine Savior, and who therefore perish without the least umbrage of excuse. Oh! what wonders does Jehovah perform, in prosecution of this method of salvation! What wonders of pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace! What miracles of glory and blessedness does he form out of the dust, and the polluted fragments of human nature! What monuments of his own glorious perfections does he erect, through all the extensive regions of heaven! From these wonderful works of his, the glory of his own name breaks forth upon the worlds of angels and men, in one bright unclouded day, which shall never be obscured in night, but grow more and more illustrious through the endless ages of eternity! Of this, the choir of angels were sensible at the birth of Christ; and therefore they shout aloud in ascriptions of glory to God. It was especially on this account they rejoiced in this great event. And all believers rejoice in it principally on this account too. “Glory to God,” is the first note in the song of angels: and “hallowed be thy name;” that is, let thy name be sanctified, or glorified, is the first petition in the prayer of men. The glory of God should always be nearest our hearts: to this every thing should give way; and we should rejoice in other things, and even in our own salvation, as they tend to promote this. Such is the temper of every good man: his heart is enlarged, and extended beyond the narrow limits of self: he has a generous tender regard for the glory of the great God; and rejoices in the way of salvation through Christ, not merely as it makes him happy, but especially as it advances and displays the divine honor. This is his temper, at least in some hours of refined, exalted devotion. Self is, as it were, swallowed up in God. And brethren, is this your temper?

“Glory to God *in the highest!*” — In the *highest*; that is, in the *highest strains*. Let the songs of men and angels be raised to a higher key, on this great occasion. The usual strains of praise are low and languid, to celebrate the birth of this illustrious prince. This is a more glorious event than ever has yet happened in heaven or earth; and therefore demands a new song, more exalted and divine than has ever yet employed even the voices of angels. At the birth of nature, the sons of God, the angels, sang together, and shouted for joy: but when the Author and Lord of nature is born, let them raise a loftier and a more ecstatic anthem of praise.

Or, “Glory to God *in the highest*,” may signify, let glory be given to God in the *highest heaven* by all the choirs of *angels*. This celestial squadron call upon their fellow angels, whom they left behind them in their native heaven, to echo to their song, and fill those blessed regions with the melody of new ascriptions of praise, as if they had said — though men receive the benefit, let all the angels of heaven join in the song of gratitude. Though men be silent, and refuse to celebrate the birth of their Savior and Lord; though earth does not echo with his praise, though more intimately concerned; let the heavenly inhabitants sound aloud their ascriptions of glory, and supply the guilty defect of ungrateful mortals.

Or finally, “Glory to God *in the highest*,” may mean, glory to God who *dwells* in the *highest heavens*: glory to the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, and dwelleth in the high and holy place; Isaiah 57:15, and yet condescends to regard man that is a worm, Job 25:6, and sends his Son to assume his humble nature, to lie in a manger, and die upon a cross for him. Glory to God for this astonishing condescension and grace!

The next article of this angelic song is, “Peace on earth!” Peace to rebel man with his offended Sovereign; peace with angels; peace with conscience; peace between man and man; universal peace on earth, that region of discord and war.

Peace *with God to rebel man*. The illustrious Prince now born comes to make up the

difference, and reconcile the world to their offended Sovereign. He is the great Peacemaker, who shall subdue the enmity of the carnal mind, and reduce the revolted sons of Adam to a willing subjection to their rightful Lord. He will bring thousands of disloyal hearts to love God above all, which were wont to love almost every thing more than Him. He will reconcile them to the laws of his government, and the practice of universal obedience and holiness. He will set on foot a treaty of *peace* in the *ministry* of the gospel, and send out his ambassadors, to beseech the rebels in his stead, to be reconciled to God. He will also reconcile God to man, by answering all the demands of his law and justice, paying the debts of insolvent sinners, and making amends for all their offences. He will appear as an all prevailing advocate with his Father, in favor of a rebel world, and turn his heart to them again. So that this revolted province of his dominions shall again become the object of his love, and he will look down and smile upon the obnoxious sons of men. Oh happy peace! Oh blessed peacemaker! that puts an end to so fatal and unnatural a war, and brings the Creator and his creatures, the offended Sovereign and his rebellious subjects into mutual friendship again, after the grand breach, that seemed likely never to be made up, and indeed never could be made up but by so great and powerful a Mediator; a Mediator of infinite dignity, merit and authority, able to remove all obstructions in the way of both parties.

The Peace proclaimed on this grand occasion may also imply, *Peace with angels*; peace between the inhabitants of heaven and earth. The angelic armies, the militia of heaven, are always upon the side of their Sovereign; always at war with his enemies, and ready to fight his battles. And upon the apostasy of our world they were ready to take up arms against the rebels. But now, when their Sovereign proclaims peace, they lay down their arms, they acquiesce in the peace, and receive the penitent, returning rebels with open arms. These benevolent beings rejoice in the restoration of their fellow creature man to the divine favor, and shout forth their songs of praise upon the publication of the news.

Again; this proclamation of peace may include *peace with conscience*. When man commenced an enemy to his Maker, he became an enemy to himself: his own conscience took up arms against him, and is perpetually fighting the cause of its Lord. But now the guilt of past sin may be washed away from the conscience with the pacific blood of Jesus, and all its clamors silenced by his all satisfying righteousness. And now the peace will be preserved, and the contracting of new guilt prevented, by the sanctifying influence of the grace of this newborn Prince. His grace shall change disloyal hearts, and reform rebellious lives; and those shall enjoy the approbation of their conscience, who were wont to sweat and agonize under its tormenting accusations. Thus, self tormenting sinners shall be reconciled to themselves; and peace in their own breasts shall be a perennial source of happiness.

Farther; peace on earth includes peace between man and man. Now the Prince of peace is born; and upon his appearance let animosity and discord, contentions and wars cease; and let universal harmony and benevolence prevail through the world. Let the bonds of love unite all the sons of Adam together in the closest friendship. It was love that constrained him to put on the nature of man, and to change his throne in heaven for a manger: love is the ruling passion of his soul: love is the doctrine he shall preach: love is the disposition he shall inspire; and love is the first principle of his religion. Therefore, let all the world be melted and molded into love; let the wolf and the lion put on the nature of the lamb; and let nothing hurt or destroy through all the earth. Let nation no more lift up sword against nation: let them beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; and let them learn war no more. For of him it is foretold, that in his days abundance of peace shall flourish, so long as the moon endureth (Psa. 72:7). This, my brethren, has already been accomplished in part: for peace and benevolence is the genius of Christianity; and wherever it has prevailed, it has introduced peace and harmony in families, in neighborhoods, and among nations: nor can the present disturbed state of things, the animosities,

quarrels and wars, that are in the world, disprove what I say: for these prevail only so far as the Christian spirit does not prevail.² Just as much as there *is* of these among men, just so much of Christianity is *wanting*; just so far the genuine tendency of the birth of Jesus fails of its efficacy. However, we rejoice in the hope, that our world shall yet see better times, and experience the full effects of this illustrious birth: when the kingdom of the Prince of peace shall become universal, and diffuse peace among all nations. Oh! when shall that glorious revolution commence!

The next article in the song of angels is, "Good will towards men." That is, the good will and grace of God is now illustriously displayed towards men, sinful and unworthy as they are. And may they dutifully receive it, and enjoy all the happy effects of it!

Thus the angels *declared*, *foretold*, and *wished*. They *declared* that even then glory would redound to God, peace be established on earth, and the good will and favor of God enjoyed by guilty men. And they *foretold* that thus it would be more and more to the end of time, and even through all eternity. And they also *wished* these glorious effects might follow, as agreeable to the high regard they had for the divine honor, and their generous benevolence to their unworthy fellow creatures, men.

This suggests a question, and also an answer to it. The question is, since the angels were not redeemed by Jesus Christ, and do not share in the benefits of redemption, as man does, why did they thus rejoice and sing at his birth? This we can account for from their regard to the glory of God, and their good will to men.

Their happiness consists in the knowledge and love of God: and the more he displays his perfections in his works, the more they know of him, and consequently the more they love him. Now the redemption of sinners through Jesus Christ gives the most upright and amiable view of the divine perfections: and on this account the inhabitants of heaven rejoice in it. They know more of God from this great event, than from all

² Editor's Note: This sermon was preached on December 25, 1758 and again on December 25, 1760.

his other works of creation and providence. Hence St. Peter represents them as bending and looking with eager eyes, to pry into this mystery. St. Paul also intimates, that the founding of a church in our guilty world, and particularly the gathering of the poor outcast Gentiles into it, was a secret even to the angels, till revealed by the event; and that the revelation of it discovered to them more of the wisdom of God, than they ever knew before. This, says he, was a mystery, “which from the beginning of the world was hid in God;” *but* it is now revealed, “to the intent that unto principalities and powers,” — to the various ranks of angels, “might be known by the church the *manifold wisdom* of God” (Eph. 3:8, 10). This cleared up many of the dark events of Providence, which they could not before account for: and enabled them to see farther into the designs of divine wisdom. Methinks when Abel, or the first saint from our world, arrived in heaven, the glorious natives of that country were struck with agreeable surprise, and wondered how he came there. They were ready to give up the whole race for lost, like their kindred angels that fell; and could contrive no possible method for their recovery. And how then are these earth born strangers admitted into heaven? And when they found, by the proceedings of divine Providence, that God had gracious designs towards our world, and that these designs were to be accomplished by his Son, must they not be agreeably perplexed and bewildered to find out the manner in which he would accomplish them? In what way could he satisfy divine justice, who was himself the judge? How could he die for sin, who was all immortal? These and the like difficulties must perplex the inquiries even of angels. But now all is made plain; now the grand secret is disclosed. The Son of God must become the son of man, must obey the law, and die upon the cross; and thus he was to accomplish the great design, and restore guilty man to the favor of God. — Angels must rejoice at this discovery, as advancing the glory of God, and increasing their own happiness.

Again: the angels are benevolent beings, and therefore rejoice at the birth of Christ, as tending to the salvation of poor sinners of the race of

man. The Lord of angels tells us, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10). And how much more must they rejoice to see the grand scheme disclosed, by which numerous colonies were to be transplanted from our guilty world to people the heavenly regions, and perhaps fill the vacant seats of the fallen angels?

I may add, it is not unlikely that the angels may receive some great advantages, to us unknown, by the mediation of Christ; though they do not need a mediator in the same sense that we do. But I have not time to enlarge upon this.

You now see the reasons of the joy of angels on this occasion: and it is no wonder they sung, “Glory to God in the highest, for peace proclaimed on earth, and good will towards men.”

But how ought we to improve this subject more immediately for our own advantage? This is our great concern; for we are personally interested in it, which the angels were not; at least, not in the same degree. Hence then,

We may learn how we ought to celebrate the birth of Christ — celebrate it like angels, not with balls and assemblies — not with reveling and carousing, and all the extravagances that are usual at this season; as if you were celebrating the birth of Venus or Bacchus, or some patron of iniquity; not with the sound of bells, muskets and cannons, and the other demonstrations of joy, upon occasions of a civil nature. Some of these are not innocent upon any occasion, and have a direct tendency to make men still more thoughtless, and giddy, and to prevent the blessed effects of this illustrious birth. Others of them, though lawful upon seasons of public national joy, for temporal blessings or deliverances, yet are impious and profane, when practiced in honor of the incarnation of the holy Jesus. You will all grant, no doubt, that religious joy ought to be expressed in a religious manner; that the usual mirth, festivity, and gayety of a birth night, in honor of our earthly sovereign, are not proper expressions of joy for the birth of a spiritual Savior — a Savior from this vain world — from sin and hell. Therefore, I say, celebrate it as the angels did; giving glory to God in the

highest, in your songs of praise; giving him glory by dwelling upon the wonders of redemption, in delightful meditation; by giving him your thoughts and affections; and by a life of devotion and universal obedience. Celebrate the birth of this great Prince of peace, by accepting that peace which angels proclaimed. Give a welcome reception to this glorious stranger. Do not turn him out of doors, as the Bethlehemites did; but entertain him in your hearts. Let every faculty of your souls open to receive him. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in" (Psalm 24:7). O let every heart cry, "Come in, thou blessed of the LORD: wherefore standest thou without?" (Gen. 24:31). He came to procure and restore peace between God and man; therefore I, his poor ambassador, "pray you in his stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). No longer continue in arms, rejecting his authority, trampling upon his laws, and refusing the offers of his grace: otherwise this peace will not extend to you; but war, eternal war, will continue between you and the Lord God omnipotent. But if the boldest rebel among you this day submit to his government, you shall enjoy the blessed peace, which angels proclaimed at his entrance into the world, and which he left as a legacy to his friends, when he was about to leave it (John 14:27). Make peace also with your own conscience; and scorn to live at variance with yourselves. How ill do you take it, when others condemn you? and can you be easy, while perpetually condemning yourselves? Let conscience have full liberty to exercise its authority upon you, as Jehovah's deputy, and dare not to disobey its orders. Live in peace also with one another. Silence; ye noisy brawlers: the Prince of Peace is born. Peace! be still! ye contentious, angry passions: the Prince of peace is born. Away slander, backbiting, quarrelling, envy, malice, revenge — away to your native hell: for know ye not, that the Prince of peace has entered into this world, and forbid you to appear upon it? Thus, brethren, celebrate the birth of the Savior, and that not only upon this day, but every day through all your lives: and thus you may have a *merry Christmas* all the year round.

To conclude: What encouragement may this angelic proclamation afford to trembling, desponding penitents? Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy; for to you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord. O! do not your hearts spring within you at the news? I have somewhere heard of a crowd of criminals under condemnation, confined in one dungeon: and upon a messenger's arriving from their king, and proclaiming a pardon, they all rushed out so eagerly to receive the pardon, and see the publisher of the joyful news, that they trod and crushed one another to death. And shall there be no such pressing and crowding to Jesus Christ in this assembly today? Shall there be no such eagerness among us to receive a pardon from his hands? Alas! will any of you turn this greatest blessing of heaven into a curse? Was it your destroyer that was born, when the angels sung the birth of a Savior? Indeed, if you continue to neglect him, you will find him such to you; and it would have been better for you, that neither you nor HE had ever been born. Even the birth of the Prince of peace proclaims eternal war against *you*. I therefore now pray you in his stead to be reconciled to him. *Amen.* ☞

Another Sermon By Samuel Davies

The Mediatorial Kingdom and Glories of Jesus Christ

This sermon was published in its entirety in the July/September 2000 issue of *The Blue Banner*. If you missed it or if you want more copies to distribute, they are now available. Pricing: 1-9 \$1.25 each, 10 for \$6.00, 25 or more for 0.40/each. Special Offer: Additional copies of both this issue and the July 2000 issue can be purchased in sets. 1-9, \$2.00. 10 for \$9.00. 25 or more for 0.60 each. Shipping extra. See order form on page 36.

Family Reformation Promoted

In a Sermon on Joshua 24:15. Originally published in London in 1656, the text is from the edition published in *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature*, volume 4 (Naphtali Press, 1991). Copyright © 2001 Chris Coldwell. The catechism on family relations published with this sermon is not reproduced here.

By Daniel Cawdrey, Puritan and Westminster Divine

PREFACE

For the better understanding, and easier practice of the following treatise, be pleased to take notice of these three things: 1. The reason of my undertaking this work. 2. The end, or design I had in it. 3. The use of it; with the directions tending thereunto.

1. For my undertaking this work, I desire not to assume or arrogate to myself, anything more than is mine own (the method and ordering of the several questions and answers in the little catechisms) professing ingenuously, the materials thereof to be none of mine. They were first lent me first by my ever honored father, Master Robert Cawdrey (long since gone to his rest and glory)¹ in a tract first written and published by him, called *A Godly Form of Household Government*; which found good acceptance and success among the people of God; but since his decease perused and augmented by those two pious and famous divines in this generation, Mr. Dod and Mr. Cleaver. In whom I have nothing to complain of, in their publication of it, but that they *raised up seed to themselves*, and not to their deceased brother: I mean, for putting to the book their own names, concealing (or at least observing, the name of the first father of it; only putting the two first letters of his names, R.C., which signifies nothing to a strange reader). But I shall as much commend them for their learned additions, and

pious augmentations, to make that discourse more full and complete. From that book, I say, I borrowed the materials; and after them, from that reverend, judicious and godly divine (whose works and labors are famous in all the churches and his reward now with his God) Dr. Gouge, in his tract *Of Domesticall Duties*; wherein they are more elaborately and largely handled; but perhaps too largely for young ones to learn or remember; and the book too dear for many, yea most poor householders to buy. I once (during our sitting together in the assembly) motioned the business to himself, that he would be pleased, to extract that his larger discourse, into some shorter questions and answers, fitted both to the capacity of younger people in a family, and to the purses of the poorer sort; who have most need of such instructions. His answer (as I remembered) was that he liked the motion well, but wanted time and leisure to do it; and withal, not only gave me leave, but desired me to do what I thought to be most useful therein. I had some thoughts, diverse years since, to have done it in his lifetime, to have had his judgment and directions in it. But other troubles and business, hitherto diverted the execution of it. I only drew out some particulars, for the use of my own people, and family, and some private friends; which being now perfected, and methodized, I present to the public view, together with a short sermon, of the *Duty and Necessity of Family Reformation*; to persuade, if possible (the blessing of God accompanying it) all householders, to put the same in practice; I doubt not, but if all the aforesaid authors were now living, they would approve of this my undertaking, as others yet alive have done. That for the first.

¹ Daniel Cawdrey. This son of an old Nonconformist divine, Robert Cawdrey, was an eminent Puritan and a notable member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. The sermon republished here is a sermon he preached to his congregation at Great Billing in Northampton, to which is appended a short catechism on the duties of fathers, mothers, and children.

2. For the end or design in it, it was in general, nothing but the glory of God, and the good of souls, families, towns, churches, and the whole nation in all these; to the advancing whereof, not only my holy calling (however now despised by ungodly men), but my resolutions of a long time, have obliged me; having devoted myself (while I live, which cannot now be long) to the public good; which I believe may be much promoted, by a conscientious use of the directions herein given, for it is obvious to every observation, that families are the seminaries [schools] of towns, churches, countries, and nations; and are as it were, the hives, out of which do swarm the materials of greater assemblies; if therefore they be not well principled therein all their relations, the rest must needs miscarry. And here, I observed, was the true original of all our miscarriages and mischiefs abroad; that when young people went out thence, to constitute new families, either as servant, or by marriage, they knew not the particular duties of their new relations; as husbands and wives, as parents and children, as masters and servants; because for the most part, they were never taught them in the families from whence they were transplanted. Remove a crabstock from a barren to fruitful soil, it will still be a crabstock, without change of nature. It is a certain truth, a thousand times exemplified, *that (without special converting grace) he or she shall never be good parents to their children, that were not good children to their parents; nor they good governors of servants that were not good servants to their governors; nor they good husband or wife, in their own families that were not good in their former family relations, as children or servants; nor lastly, will those who are naught in their family relations be good neighbors in a town, good members of a church, or good subjects, or magistrates in the state. A good man is the proper subject of the goodness of all other relations; and he only is a good man, that is good in his first relations; the spring then of all reformation, in towns, churches, nations (next to personal reformation, where every one mends one, that is himself) is that which is found in families. If they were but either well constituted, or well ordered and reformed, the whole work were done. And that's the design of*

this discourse, and the second thing propounded to consideration.

3. The third and last now only remains, which is the use and directions how to improve this treatise, to the ends for which it was designed. For the expediting whereof, I shall have respect. First to the constitution of a new family; and secondly to a family already constituted. For as it is in churches (and the house is or should be a little church) they are considered either in their first constitution, or as already constituted; so it is in families; some rules will fit the first constitution of it, and others the ordering of it, when corrupted.

1. If a family is to be newly constituted, as commonly by the marriage of single persons it is, then they become first husband and wife, then parents to children, and with that masters of servants, which are all the relations of a family. The principal care must be to choose fit materials for the building; which how well, and how far it may be done, is delivered in the sermon hereto annexed, to which I refer the reader.

2. For a family already constituted, but corrupted and needing reformation, the same course must be taken, as in reforming a corrupted church. For as there, preaching and catechism, and all ways of instruction are first to be used by the minister, the chief officer thereof; and after that, the practice of that knowledge wrought must be pressed by admonition, reproof, exhortation; and lastly (if these proceedings prove ineffectual) the exercise of discipline and censures upon willful and stubborn offenders.

Just so it ought to be in a family, as it is also a little more largely directed in the sermon following, to which I refer. But we are to speak now only to the first of those three, how the chief householder may lay that foundation of reformation in his family; which is by knowing, and teaching them under his charge, the true knowledge of those duties belonging to the several relations of a family, as afore. To which purpose I would commend (if they have not better) the reading, and practicing (in all good conscience and sincerity) of the sermon following, as far as it concerns themselves in their single,

double, or threefold relation, viz. as husbands to wives, as parents to children, as masters to servants; and then to teach the rest of the family (their co-relates) wives, children, servants, their particular duties according to their relations respectively. But when their children or servants are to be transplanted, either for the constituting a new family, as husbands or wives, or for the furnishing of another family, as servants; then to acquaint them, with and make them understand, the duties of their new relations, before they come to practice them. To which end, the little short catechism fitted for each relation will much conduce, if they be taught, and explained wisely by the chief householder, and impressed on them, by his own example, in the performance of his duties in all his own relations.

The benefit of teaching and whetting on [*sharpening*] of these principles, conscientiously, will be exceeding great. For,

1. By this means householders themselves may come to see, repent of, and amend their own miscarriages, not only when they were children or servants, but also their present neglects, of their duties, as husbands, parents, masters, which they must perform, as they expect that their co-relates should be good and serviceable to them, or God's blessing upon both.

2. By the knowledge they may get by teaching others, they may not only learn their own duties in all their relations, but also be able to call upon their inferiors to do their duties, and exact them of them, when they go astray.

3. This (if they have any conscience, or care to please God) may serve to make them the more careful to perform their own duties, in all their relations; because now their inferiors will be able to discover their failings, having learned their duties in all such relations, when God shall call them to them.

4. This way they may fit and prepare their children and servants, to be materials of new families, as husbands or wives (according to their sex) to be parents or masters; being already furnished with the knowledge of the duties of those new relations.

5. And lastly, make them instrumental and serviceable to the public good, as good neighbors in towns, good members of churches, good subjects in the state, and some of them good officers in Church or State; for that rule of the apostle here holds well: *He that cannot rule his own family, how shall he govern the Church, or Commonwealth* (1 Tim. 3:4-5)?

One thing more, and I have done. Because duties will not easily go down or be digested, if they be not manifested to be imposed by divine authority; I have (following the reverent doctor herein) backed the most of them, by texts of scripture, which hold out either express commands, or eminent examples of holy saints, the best comments upon commands; or noted extravagances of wicked men, against the rule of the word; which in opening and explaining of the answers are to be taken notice of, and applied by the chief householder. I need say no more to persuade the governors of families, to set upon the exercise and practice of these directions, than what I have said in the sermon. I only add this short ejaculation for them and theirs, that the God of all grace would bless and prosper them, to the glory of his name, the honor of religion, the good of Church and State; and to the furthering of their comfort here, and external salvation and glory hereafter. Amen.

FAMILY REFORMATION PROMOTED IN A SERMON ON JOSHUA 24:15

But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

There has been of late (all know) much talk, but (God knows) more need of a general reformation. The foundations of Church and State, are out of course; and unless God put under his hand, very like to come to confusion. The common mistake, and mischief is, that every man almost complains, but few or none do help to amend what is amiss, in themselves or others. It were the readiest (as first and chiefest) way to reform all, for every one to mend one; that is himself. For a family, being made up of single persons, in several relations; towns or congregations of many families, and the whole nation, of towns, or

congregations; if single persons were but as they should be, and as in serious thoughts they acknowledge they ought to be, that is religiously good, the whole body of Church or State, must needs be so. But it is not so easy a matter, to reform one man; I mean, to persuade him to reform himself; while some, for ignorance cannot, others for the impetuousness of their lusts, will not; and others out of self conceit, think they need not reform, unless there be some other superior, and superintendent power to do it; we are not like in haste to see a reformation. There are therefore (blessed be God) some other means left us to effect this work. First the governors of families. Secondly, officers in the Church. And thirdly, magistrates in the State. If governors of families would but reform their own relations, the Church would have little use of her discipline, and the State less of execution of justice. If on the other side, towns or congregations are loose and profane, the nation consisting of them, cannot be good or happy. If families are wicked and licentious, towns and parishes, consisting of them, must needs be naught. And if single persons are (and in spite of household discipline, will be) vicious, families consisting of such, must necessarily be bad; and consequently all very bad. The reformation then of all, should first begin with single persons; if they refuse, the householder must undertake the cure. In his default, the officers of the Church must make supply by their discipline. And in their neglect, either the civil magistrate must reform, both Church and families, and single persons, or expect nothing but ruin and destruction of all. Now seeing (as was said) it is not possible, or not very probable for us (ministers) to persuade every single person, to a serious and thorough reformation of himself; it remains to us in the second place, to try how far we can prevail with chief householders to act their part, to make their families good, so all good who have both power in their hands, and all good reason to move them thereunto, as shall appear hereafter. For this purpose, I have chosen this text, as a worthy instance of an exemplary resolution, in a great and good householder; that renowned Joshua by name: who (leaving others to their choice) for himself and family, undertakes to be religious.

“Do you,” he says, “as you please, choose what gods you will serve. *But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*”

In the words we may without much curiosity of division, consider these general parts.

I. The epitome of all religion, expressed in these words, to serve the Lord; which is the sum of both tables of the law, especially of the first.

II. Joshua’s resolution to serve the Lord; wherein we have three particulars:

1. His appropriation of it to himself, “As for me, I will serve the Lord.”

2. The extension of his religion, to his family; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

3. The order of it. First himself will be religious, and then his house: “I and my house,” etc.

I. For the first, the service of God, to be the sum of all religion; it appears by those places of scripture where true religion is commanded: *Ye shall serve the Lord thy God* (Ex. 23:25). *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee? but to serve him with all they heart and all they soul.* How? *To keep the commandments of the Lord,* etc. (Deut. 10:12). That is, all his commandments of both tables. Some there are who distinguish worship and service, making worship the object of the first table, and service of the second; but without any ground of scripture. For that holds our service as more general, and including worship, as a more special part of God’s service — as is evident in the texts above cited, and many more like unto them. We may better distinguish the service of God into immediate which is properly called worship, in the first table, and mediate, by men, which is called righteousness in the second table. For though we do not properly worship God by doing the works of righteousness, yet are we said to serve God in doing to men the duties of the second table; as the apostle says of servants, *that in obeying their masters, they serve the Lord Christ* (Col. 3:24). We note this because it will be of use anon.

II. For the particulars of the second part of Joshua’s resolution, many things might be observed; but we shall waive them all, and look

at him only, as a householder, with relation to his family:— *I and my house will serve the Lord* — and draw out this one observation.

That it is the property, and duty of a good householder, to provide and take care, that all under his charge do serve the Lord; that is, be religious, and righteous, the one towards God, the other towards men. We shall first confirm it, and then apply it.

[To] confirm it, 1. in general. And here we have first the commended example of Abraham, the father of the faithful, by God himself (Gen. 18:19), *I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment,* etc. Which also he practiced (Gen. 14:14), where we hear of his trained, or instructed, catechized servants. And Gen. 17:23, being entered into covenant himself, and circumcised; *he circumcised the same day, Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and bought with money.* This family religion, or reformation, is graciously and courageously resolved on by David (Psalm 101:2, etc.), *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. I will walk within my house, with a perfect house, with a perfect heart,* etc. And mark his wisdom, both in the constitution, and ordering of his family (vs. 3-4). *I will set no wicked thing (a thing of Belial, the description of a wicked person) before mine eyes. I hate the work of them that turn aside,* etc. *I will not know a wicked person,* as if [he] said, none shall come into my house. *He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell in my house (or if he do unawares come in) he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight (v. 7).* Who then shall serve him? He that will serve God with him: *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me. He that walketh in a perfect way (as I resolved to do, ver. 2) he shall serve me.* Hence it is observable in the New Testament, that as a proper consequence of the householder's conversion, when any such believed, his family believed with him. John 4:53 it is said of that nobleman: *Himself believed, and his whole house.* So Acts 16:15, Lydia was converted, baptized, and her household; and (v. 33) the jailer was baptized he and all his; as if they had learned

Joshua's resolution: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." This for the general.

2. We shall look more specially and particularly at those duties which concern the good householder to perform and practice; and that with respect either to his relations, or to the particular services, required in the family.

[1] In respect to his several relations in the family; which oftentimes (if not always) are of three sorts: 1. As a husband to a wife. [2] As a parent to a children. [3] As a master to servants. The same person may stand in this threefold relation, and in all these the duty lies upon him, to see that all under his charge do serve the Lord. See the particulars.

[1] As a husband to a wife; and the apostle has instructed him in that, 1 Pet. 3:7, *Likewise ye husbands dwell with them (your wives) according to knowledge,* etc. That is, being able and ready to instruct, and guide them, in the service and ways of God. This is implied also, 1 Cor. 14:35, *If wives will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home;* and (v. 34), *they are commanded obedience, as also saith the law:* which implies he has power to command them, to know, and serve God. How else can a husband say (as Joshua) *I and my house will serve the Lord,* when one principal party, is at liberty to serve the devil, without control.

[2] As a father (or in his death or absence, a mother) unto children. The scripture is express for this, and full. Deut. 6:7-8: *These words which I command thee, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children; and thou shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* The same is repeated again (to note the excellency and necessity, and common neglect of this duty), Deut 11:18, with this addition in both places. *Thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house, and upon thy gates, to make them know, and remember them the better.* So Prov. 22:6, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* The New Testament speaks the same language (Eph.

6), *And ye parents, bring up your children in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord.*

[3] As a master to servants: Abraham's example is here recorded for imitation. *He will command his household (as well as his children), that is, his servants, and they shall keep the way of the Lord,* etc. That Psalm 101 is David's profession, for ordering his servants. He will have all his servants faithful and religious, or make them such, or else eject, and turn them out of doors. The masters of families (Ex. 12:44), were to see that their servants did eat the Passover; and did sanctify the Sabbath (Ex. 20, in the fourth commandment). Thus in respect to his relations.

(2) In respect to the several kinds of services of God, to be maintained in the family; and they are (as we said) of two sorts.

[1] Immediate service of God, in the first table of the law, called specially worship; and that according to the four commandments thereof: {1} To know, fear, love, trust, delight in God, required in the first commandment. {2} To cause them to know, and attend upon all instituted ordinances of worship; as prayers, reading, hearing the word: grace and thankfulness at meals, sacraments, etc. {3} To reverence God's name, in not taking it in vain; and reverent using of all his ordinances and creatures. {4} To sanctify his Sabbath; these the chief householder is to take care of, in all in his family, as the places afore cited manifest.

[2] Mediate service is that which at second hand, redounds to God, by serving of men, according to the commandments of the second table; teaching them to be obedient to superiors; to be meek, quiet, peaceable; to be chaste and temperate; to be just and righteous in their dealings. To be true and faithful in their words; and to be moderate in their desires, contented with their own estate, etc. In doing these things, men are said, by reflection, and at last result to serve God; as is clearly spoken of servants, Col. 3:24 and Eph. 6:6. *Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.* And (v. 7), *With good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men.* God is pleased to esteem himself served and

worshipped, in faithful performance of the works of our callings, and duties of the second table, to our neighbor; as well as in our immediate worship of himself, in the first table.

Thus have we both explained, and confirmed the doctrine, by light, and proofs of scripture; we shall add the light and strength of reason.

1. The chief householder, is in his family God's deputy or viceroy, yea a God to his wife, children, and servants, as Moses was to Aaron (Ex. 4:16). And therefore to manage his authority for God, in promoting his service, in the little world, or kingdom of his own house. He has God's titles, of father, and lord put upon him; and so the supreme power in the family, to command all his subjects (for so they are in a sense) for God; as was said of Abraham, *he will command his household,* etc. He is also called the head of the family (though chiefly of his wife) to oversee and guide the body, that little domestical body.

2. The chief householder Christian, is in Christ's stead, to his family. And hence it is said of dutiful servants, that in serving their masters, they serve the Lord Christ (Col. 3:24), whose deputies, masters are to them. Whereupon they are invested with all his offices (as every good Christian is to himself, Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2) of Prophet, Priest, and King. These three offices met all in one man at the beginning, as in Adam to be sure; he was all these to his family. Afterwards, they were severed, and distributed into several persons: one a prophet, another a priest, another a king. Sometimes two of them met in one person, a priest and a king, as Melchizedek; a prophet and a priest, as Samuel; a prophet and a king as David. But they never met all in one person, till Christ, the second Adam, was anointed above his fellows, and recovered that which the first Adam lost. And this ointment, descended to the skirts of his garments, the meanest of his members; but especially to householders, as their primitive right, to be in one person, a prophet, a priest, and a king to his family.

[We] touch but the particulars.

(1) A prophet, to teach and instruct his household (Deut. 6:6), *Thou shalt diligently teach*

them, etc. (Eph 6:6). Every householder is a preacher to his own family, a minister in a sense, to read and expound with modesty, the word of God, to catechize and instruct his wife, children [and] servants.

(2) A priest, to offer sacrifice for them, and with them as Job did for his: both propitiatory sacrifice (after a sort), that is, praying for pardon of their sins, and for grace; and peace-offerings, or eucharistical sacrifices, of praises and thanksgiving, for them and with them, as for himself. 1 Peter 2:9, *Ye are a royal priesthood that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness, into his marvelous light.*

(3) A king to rule and command (as well as to protect) his family. Abraham will command his household, etc. And the coercive and correcting power over his family, argues his authority to be king-like. The very heathens acknowledged this truth by the light of nature (Eph. 1, last). That every man should bear rule in his own house. It is spoken with respect to the wife; but will much more extend to children and servants. There is a kind of civil judicature erected in the family, a power to examine, try, censure, punish, and eject offenders (Gen. 21:10). *Cast out the bondwoman with her son.* And this household discipline David resolves to exercise in his house (Ps. 101), either to keep out, or cast out such as are wicked and incorrigible. This of the second reason.

3. Every chief householder has *Curam animarum*, the charge of the souls of his family (not properly pastoral, but very like it). He must give an account of the souls of his wife, children, servants, as well as the magistrate of the souls of his subjects (Ezek. 34:10), of the minister of the souls of his people (Ezek. 2:18). It concerns him therefore very nearly to endeavor to make them religious, which is the only way to save their souls.

4. Every Christian house, should be a lesser church as the Church is called the house of God. Hence we read of *a church in a house* (Rom. 16:5), *the church which is in the house of Aquila and Priscilla*; (Phile., v. 2), *the Church in thy house.* Whether it were because the congregation did

assemble in their houses (having at that time no public place of meeting); or that in their houses there were enough to make a little church (as some limit the number at least to seven); or whether their houses were so ordered for religion, that they seemed to be lesser churches; it is not material to inquire. Of that famous emperor's house, Constantine, it is reported by Eusebius, that the exercises of religion were so ordered in it, that it differed little from a church; there were prayers morning and evening, reading of the word, catechizing, singing of psalms (all but sacraments and preaching) as in the church. And to use St. Chrysostom's words (on Psalm 41), *Where there are (in a house) prayers, and singing of psalms, and reading of the prophets, etc., a man should not much mistake in calling such a meeting or assembly a church.* And this service of God in the family he calls a good liturgy, and worship of God. And besides there is, or should be, exercised a church-like discipline, even a lesser excommunication of refractory offenders; as David professes he would deal with wicked, proud, deceitful, lying servants. If by instruction, admonition, correction, he could not reclaim them he would excommunicate and cast them out of the church, in his house (Ps. 101). This may suffice for confirmation of the point.

We now come to the application of all, by uses and inferences therefore.

1. To consider and bewail the rashness of many young ones, who rush upon family relations, and never know or weigh how fit, or unfit they are to discharge the duties of those relations. They must be married forsooth, in all the haste; there's one relation. Then come children (perhaps before the lawful time); there's another. And then servants must be had, to attend them and theirs; that's a third relation. But [they] know not what the duties of any of those relations are, nor the charge of those souls, under their inspection. While a man is single, he has care (almost) of none, but his own soul. and much liberty to study how *to serve and please God* (1 Cor. 7:34). But when once he has a family, made up of these three relations, his duties are multiplied with them, and now he must take care of the souls of wife, children, servants; and yet scarcely knows

how to take care of his own soul. Little do they consider, that the chief householder must be a prophet to teach, a priest to pray with and for, and king to rule his own family; when they cannot teach, pray, or rule themselves. Let this consideration check and cool the heat, and heady rashness of younger people.

2. This may serve to discover the iniquity of that so much called for cursed toleration of all religions, falsely called liberty conscience. The mischiefs of it are so many, and so great, that they cannot be afore hand imagined; besides the public, disturbance of the peace, by different fractions and factions, etc., the natural, or unnatural consequences of such a toleration; the divisions in families will be as many almost, as there are persons; and the wisest householder cannot possibly redress it. But the main is this: that it will prove impossible for the most pious householder to do his duty, in making his family religious, and to serve God with him, in all his relations, whenas he has no coercive power to resolve with Joshua, *I and my house will serve the Lord*. Suppose (which experience daily confirms to be true) the householder to be a godly, zealous Protestant, his wife an independent, the children Anabaptists, some one or more of the servants Papists, etc. How is it possible the superior should unite all these into a church in his house, to serve God, if a toleration for all religions is granted? Some will pretend they go to serve God in their own way, and assemblies; and perhaps go to serve the devil, in the stewes [brothels] or taverns. How shall the householder join with his family, wife, children, servants, in prayers, reading, hearing, sacraments, and sanctification of the Sabbath by all together (which is charged upon him in the fourth commandment), when they not only detest his way of serving God, but his prayers, reading, Sabbaths, etc., and perhaps himself? different affections commonly arising from differing opinions and judgments. Let the wise consider it.

3. Here's matter of just complaint of many, of most householders; who are discovered to be little religious themselves, by the profaneness, and looseness of their family: wives, children, servants. In that place afore cited (Deut. 6:6-7),

it's made a sign of a man that is godly and religious, that has God's words in his heart, that he endeavors to make his family such. *These words that I command thee shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them to thy children*, etc. Contrarily, ignorance of God, and irreligion in their families, are joined together (Jer. 10:25), and both of them characters of a nation or family lying under the wrath of God, and subject to his curse and destruction: *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon families that call not on thy name*. Much complaining there is everywhere of the badness of servants, children, wives, as if they were corrupted abroad; when the truth is, they are either corrupted, or neglected at home, for want of instruction, or household discipline, or good example of the chief and head of the family. This might be exemplified in all the relations of the family; and in all the services of God required in the family, to be exercised by the master of the house. How much looseness, profaneness, wickedness, in children, servants, wives? Take but the reason of all in a word, it is because there is no care of the service of God, in the family, by the chief of the family. Look but upon the particular services:

(1) A constant course of morning and evening prayers, is one principal part of the service of God in the family, which is evinced by this one argument (because some deny the necessity of it, and call for scripture for it) to omit others; because it being God that has placed men in a community (setting the solitary in families, Ps. 68:6), it cannot be justly conceived, he did this merely for their worldly conveniences; but rather that they should improve their society to his glory, who is the Lord of them altogether, as well as of every one single; so to worship him jointly, as well as of every one solitary and apart (Zech. 12). And as congregations, or public assemblies, are appointed purposely for the more solemn worship of God, by all several families; so are families, for a joint and less solemn worship of God, by all the single persons thereof together. And indeed, how has the family that knowledge of God, to be:

1. Their great Lord and Master;

2. The Author of their peace among themselves; *He maketh men to be of one mind in an house,* that the governor is gentle to his inferiors, and they dutiful to him;

3. The author of all blessings to them all; of health and strength to follow their labors, and of success and comfort in them; — if they agree not together to join in worship of that their Lord, and in tendering prayers and praises, for such things as they expect and receive from him? But now how visible, how common is the neglect of this service of God? How many, or rather how few, families are there that keep this course? How many go to bed like their swine, and rise again like their dog, without ever calling upon God's name? to give thanks for mercies received, or pray for what they want? The very Lord's Prayer (which runs in the plural) implies this a daily duty of every man; and being a society, it requires it of all together that can meet, to say, *Our Father*, etc. and *thine is the kingdom*, etc. The house is a little church, and so may be called a house of prayer.

(2) Reading and hearing of the word is another commanded service, as by every person single, so by all together in the family. It concerns the master of the family to see this done. Deut. 11:18, etc. is expressed for this, to make the scriptures known to their households, speaking of it to them, writing it upon the posts and gates, and reading of it is now the readiest way. But now, how many families have not one chapter read from year's end, to year's end, at least from Sabbath to Sabbath? How shall they understand the word in public, that are not acquainted with it in private? The apostle commands, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another*, etc. And it was the commendation of Timothy's parents that *he knew the holy scriptures from a child; which only are able to make a man wise to salvation*. In many families, and they great ones, we may find play-books, and amorous lascivious discourses frequently read; but rarely a chapter of the Bible, all the week long. Is it any wonder, then, that wives, children, servants, are so bad?

(3) Catechizing and instructing of those under their charge, is another service of God, and the

best means to work knowledge of God and his service in the hearts of inferiors: *Train up a child (and servant) in the trade of his youth, and when he is old, he shall not depart from it*. Thus did David drop religion into Solomon, while a child (Prov. 4:3-4), and so did his mother, Bathsheba (Prov. 31:1-2, etc). Timothy did the like (2 Tim. 2). But how is this everywhere neglected? Few children or servants are taught the catechism, the first principles of religion? Hence the unprofitableness under the best public preaching. Hence so many are seduced into so many gross errors, and heresies, and profaneness.

(4) Singing of psalms is another service of God in the family, as well as in the public. *Teaching and admonishing one another, with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in your hearts to God* (See Col. 3:16). We hear ballads, and jigs, and filthy songs, sung in families; but not a psalm all the year long.

(5) Grace, before and after meals, is a part of prayer and praises due to God; but shamefully neglected in families, or but a mere formality, if used, without any reverence. Is it any wonder children, servants, are so bad to them, when they are so bad to God? that they do as the children of Israel did, *Sit down to eat and drink, and rise up to play*; and that play was idolatry. Our blessed Savior himself never eat, or feed others at his table, but he blessed and gave thanks (Mark 8:6-7), and the apostle Paul amongst heathens observed the same (Acts 27:35). And the same apostle, speaking of meats particularly: *God hath created them to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer* (1 Tim. 4:3-5). As if it were not good, if not sanctified by prayer and thanksgiving; but may prove a serpent, even a poison to soul or body. And the neglect hereof argues (in the apostle's logic) that such persons, neither believe, nor know the truth. Let them consider it.

(6) Lastly, sanctification of the sabbath, by the whole family, in all or most of the duties aforesaid, publicly and privately, is the care of

the chief householder; as in the fourth commandment. *Remember thou keep holy the sabbath day: thou master, and thy son and daughter, manservant and maidservant.* What need for particular enumeration, if there were not a great weight in the performance thereof? But where shall we find the family that does all this? when the householders themselves neglect or profane it by their own example; and employ their children and servants, in businesses, to keep them from the public congregation, or leave them to come or go at their own pleasure; or to spend the day in idleness or sports and pastimes, that day. How can these men say truly, *I and my house, we will serve the Lord?* I shall only say more truly, what once was falsely applied to our Savior: *This man is not of God, because he keeps not the Sabbath day;* because he takes not care, that his family with him, do keep the Sabbath day. And thus much of the third use.

4. The last is a word of exhortation, to set on this duty, upon all chief householders, in all their relations, to resolve with Joshua (whatever others do), *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* To persuade them more effectually to the performance hereof, I shall propound some more special motives, and then prescribe some directions or means, how they may effect it:

(1) The motives (besides those reasons used in the doctrinal part), which should be sufficient to persuade any Christian, I shall add these which shall have respect, 1. To the family. 2. To the public. 3. To themselves.

1. To the family. It is the greatest good they can do to them, to make them religious: to provide an estate, or inheritance, for children; meat, drink, and wages for servants is no more than Turks and heathens do. What singular thing is this? Yea, they provide meat and drink for their beasts, and no more for their families' souls. To leave them interested in the covenant of grace, under the favor, blessing and protection of God, when they are gone hence: this is the chiefest, and chiefest good, and for this they will bless God for them, for ever.

2. To the public, in towns, countries, church, nation, which are all made up of families, as

families of single persons; to make the family good and religious, and make good magistrates, good subjects, good husbands, good wives, good neighbors; when any of the family swarms, as I may say so, into other societies; the town, country, kingdom, are bettered and blessed by such. He or she will never be good neighbors, subjects, etc., that were not good in their family relations. He will neither be good father, that was not a good child; nor she a good mother, that was not a good daughter; nor he a good master, that was a naughty servant; and so of the rest. Absalom, who was a rebellious child, proved a traitorous subject. Hophni and Phineas, that were disobedient children, proved sacrilegious priests, etc. There is the saying of philosophers, *Malus vir, bonus civis: An ill man, may be a good citizen;* But divinity says, *An ill man can no more be a good citizen, or neighbor, than evil can be good.* The want therefore of family reformation is the cause of all the miscarriages abroad, in towns, churches, country, nation. Hence come all those disorders in towns and nations, drunkenness, uncleanness, profaneness, etc., from want of discipline in families. This fills the jails, and furnishes the gallows. Be the laws, orders, in cities, churches, never so good; yet all [is] in vain, if masters of families neglect their duties. Much complaint there is of the general badness of the times, but they may thank themselves. And as for the Church or Congregation; the long desired, and by some much endeavored reformation, sticks here. The want of this resolution in masters of families, *I and my house will serve the Lord,* makes all the minister's labors unfruitful. It is impossible a minister should teach, instruct, and make a town, or congregation religious, unless assisted by the governors of houses. If their households are not taught the principles of religion at home, acquainted with the word, by private reading, brought to attend on, and called to account for public ordinances, all our labor comes to nothing. As then the householders intend the public good of State and Church, let them resolve, *I and my house,* etc. See Psalm 101, last [verse]; this mends all.

3. To themselves; if the others prevail not, self-love should. It is for their own greatest good, and that two ways.

(1) The way to make them faithful, diligent, profitable to themselves, is to make them truly religious. Now, wives, children, servants, obey them for conscience sake towards God. Onesimus, while unregenerate, was unprofitable to his master Philemon; a purloiner (it seems) and a runaway. But Paul, having converted him, sends him home, now profitable. Ungodly and profane servants, are commonly idle, deceitful, at best, but eye-servants; and bring a curse upon the whole family. But religious servants, if truly so, prove faithful; you may trust them with anything, with all you have (as Potiphar did Joseph, and Laban did Jacob) and they dare not be false; and diligent in their labors, because they set themselves always under the eye of God; and when their master's eye is far off them, they see him that is invisible. But above all, they are prayerful, morning and evening, and at all times, and so procure a blessing on their labors, upon estate, children, businesses entrusted with them. See an instance in Abraham's servants (Gen. 24:12), his prayer for success of his journey, and business, and (v. 33), his faithfulness, and diligence, not [to] eat till [he] knew the issue. They are enemies to their own profit, that endeavor not to make their families good.

(2) This is for their comfort, living or dying, when they shall see their care and labor succeed and blessed by God, with grace and holiness in their families. What joy and comfort will this be, to have been instrumental to their salvation? *I have* (said he) *no greater joy than this, to see my children walking in the truth.* A wise son makes a glad father; but a foolish one is a heaviness and shame to his mother. So is a wife and religious servant, no less honor than comfort to him, that they have done their duty. Though it be a grief to see no fruits of their travel, yet much more when conscious of their souls; in hell nothing more tormenting, than for not having done their duty, to help them to salvation, by instruction, admonition, correction; but rather to further their damnation, by wicked examples, and so to be filled with their curses, as soul-murderers. Let all

these things be considered. I might remember them of the famous examples of such householders, as were careful to make their families religious, in scripture and stories; those afore named: Abraham, Jacob, David, etc. And that of Constantine, the emperor, whose house was for religion, like a church. I shall give but one of later times, that of Lewis the ninth, king of France, who was found instructing a poor kitchen boy; and being asked why he would do so, said, *The meanest has a soul as precious as my own, and bought with the same blood of Christ.* But I forbear any more, and come to,

2. The directions, or means how they may make their families religious with themselves.

(1) Begin at home, and make themselves examples to their families, as Joshua here observes the right order: I first, and then my house, shall serve the Lord. Inferiors look more at what superiors do, than what they say. The wickedness of the heathen was from the lewdness of their gods and goddesses, as the poets described them. Jupiter [was] adulterous, Venus a wanton, Bacchus a reveling drunkard, etc. Who will care to be better than his God? What servant will be more religious than his master? Or maid than her lady or mistress? Nay, it is a shame to a parent, or master, to have his children, or servants better than himself. And this is the reason, why dissolute and wicked masters will not endure religious servants: because their life is a real reproof. Solomon's experience tells us, *When a ruler* (or house, or town, or nation) *hearkens to lies, all his servants are wicked* (Prov. 29:12). It's true in other vices of superiors; when they are drunkards, unchaste, profane; their servants are so too, or will quickly be made such. If you would have your families, in all relations religious and holy, be you holy in all manner of conversation; if you are wicked, it is in vain to offer to make them good. It will be said, *physician heal thyself.* Nothing either silences, or dulls the edge of instructions, reproofs, corrections more, than to hear, *Thou that teachest another, teachest not thyself?* You that say your wife, child, servant should not commit adultery, be drunk, be a profaner of the Sabbath, lie, swear, etc., do you do all, or any of these things? As one candle

cannot light another, if itself is out, so, nor shall a householder inform or inflame his family with the love of God and godliness, if [he] himself wants [lacks] it; or reform those that walk disorderly, if [he] himself needs reformation. Reformation never sticks, but (as they say in slaying of a beast) at the head. When one told Sigismund the emperor, *Let the Reformation begin from the minorities* (a kind of friar); No, says he, *If it ever be done, it must begin at the majorities*. We heard before, when the chief householder was converted and believed, all his house believed also.

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Justification by Faith: Justifying Many

Edited transcript of a sermon preached December 7, 1997.

By Richard Bacon

We have been studying the atonement in Isaiah 53:11. By "the atonement" we mean that Christ *became a penal substitute* for us. Christ took upon himself the punishment that was due to us for our sins and thus became a sin offering for us. Jesus Christ (the just) was sacrificed for us (the unjust) that He might bring us to God. (1 Peter 3:18)

There are other theories of the atonement. We need not spend much time on those errors. We maintain that the atonement is not merely a moral influence (Abelard). Christ did not merely set for us an example of sacrifice. Nor is the atonement governmental in that the sacrifice of Christ sets retribution before the eyes of the

human race such that they will understand what it means for God to be angry with sin, yet relax the requirements of it (Grotius). We do not believe in the moral influence theory. We do not believe in the governmental theory. We believe in a *vicarious* atonement — that Christ actually died *in the place* of elect sinners.

It is important for us to understand that if Christ died in the place of sinners, and if the debt of those sinners has been paid, then *no debt remains*. That debt has been wiped clean. That is why we reject a governmental theory of the atonement. The doctrine of the atonement, as it is found in part one of verse eleven, "He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied," indicates

that the knowledge that justifies is tied to the atonement. I want you to see that *if there is no substitutionary atonement, there is no justification*. And if there is no justification, then there is no gospel.

The justification of the elect is based solely upon the cross work of Christ. We say it this way: our justification is grounded in the righteousness of Christ, both in his active obedience and in his passive obedience. His active obedience means he obeyed the law perfectly in all the things he did on earth. His passive obedience is his actually dying *in the place* of his people. He suffered and died *for us*. Therefore, justification is found in the second and the third parts of this verse. The second part is, “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant *justify* many.” That is, his righteousness is imputed to us. The third part is, “He shall bear their iniquities.” That is, the punishment and guilt of our sins will be laid upon him. When God sees us, he sees us *in Christ*, and because he sees us in Christ — *who is the justified Man* — he sees us *as righteous*. He imputes the righteousness of Christ to us.

Justification may be illustrated by a ledger in which one owes a debt that he cannot pay. God crosses that debt out of his ledger. Is that a mere fiction? Does God “pretend” that we do not really owe this unpayable debt? No, we really owed it. But it has truly been paid! Christ has *really* paid our debt.

The justification of sinners is connected in Scriptures directly to the mediatorial work of Christ as a satisfaction to the justice of God. Consider Romans 3:25, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” This verse is central for our understanding of *how* God sets forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. He *declares* his righteousness for the remission of sins. Sins are remitted by the righteousness of Christ. What we see here is that there is a *declaration* of righteousness and mercy. Psalm 85:10 refers to the righteousness and mercy of God “kissing;” being brought together. God’s righteousness requires the punishment of sin; yet

his mercy passes by sin. How can these seemingly contrary ideas be reconciled? Only in the doctrine of justification by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.

How do we understand the righteousness of God? How can we comprehend the fact that God is a righteous God who *demand*s retributive punishment for our sins? Note carefully that he does not punish for the purpose of reforming us or making us better people, but because we deserve to be punished. Our breaking of the just requirements in God’s Law — “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me,” etc. — requires punishment. That just punishment is death. In Roman 3:24 we read that elect sinners are “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” How is it then, that we can say that God is righteous if he is freely justifying *sinners*? How can God be *both* just *and* a justifier of the ungodly? We often say that God will forgive sins. But taken without a context that statement *can* imply that God does not take sin seriously. What is sin? “Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God.” (WSC #14). If we were to transgress the law of God and then there were no punishment, we might believe that God does not take his law seriously.

Children, you understand this idea. If your father said, “Do not go into the barn” and then you went into the barn and were never punished, you would believe that your father did not *really* mean that you could not go into the barn. Why? Because a law without a sanction is nothing more than suggestion. In order for a prohibition to be a law, there must be a sanction for those who trespass against it. *God does take his law seriously*. He is a righteous God. Then, how can he forgive sinners? *Only by exacting the punishment on another*. But this “other” who is punished for sinners cannot deserve punishment himself. He must be righteous *in himself*. And the only “other” who meets this standard is Christ. And this “other” has to be a person who is *infinite in value*. He must die not one for one, but one for many.

It would be one thing to justify the godly. God could say, “that man was righteous all his life. He

deserves no punishment.” But God cannot say that about any of us; none of us are in that condition! All of us are ungodly; all of us “have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) Therefore, how can God justify us ungodly people and remain righteous? How does he set forth or declare his righteousness? He sets forth his righteousness in this way; *his wrath against sin must be propitiated*. His justice must be *satisfied*. There must be one who takes upon himself the wrath of God for our sin. If God did not punish sin, he would not be a righteous God; he would not be just. This paradox can be resolved only by the substitution of Jesus Christ for the ungodly. He is both a *righteous man* (that is to say, he is not taking any punishment upon himself for his own sins — because he had no sin) and a *public person* (he is the covenant head of all those who are in him). He can take upon himself not only the punishment for one person’s sin, but also the punishment for many persons’ sins.

Justification includes right standing with God. Justification and condemnation are antonyms; Scripture uses these terms as opposites. Condemnation is a courtroom term — a forensic term — that has to do with *standing* before a judge. Its antonym, justification, then, *also* is a forensic term; a term having to do with a courtroom setting and also having to do with *standing* before a judge. Reconciliation, justification and remission of sins are all tied together and all are dependent upon the atonement of Christ.

We shall detail four heads that tie the atonement, and therefore justification, inextricably to Christ. Remember the doctrine: *the justification of sinners is directly dependent in Scripture upon the mediatorial work of Christ, as satisfaction rendered for our lawbreaking and to the justice of God*.

1. CHRIST’S DEATH

Romans 5:10, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...” When we were enemies, we were *reconciled* to God by the death of Christ. *Enemies* being made *friends* is called *reconciliation*. We

were considered enemies to God. How is it then that we are reconciled to God? By the death of Christ. We are brought into a favorable relationship of *friendship with God* by the death of Christ. One can see then how reconciliation — justification and the remission of sins — is tied to the death of Christ. In Colossians 1:21-22, we read, “And you, that were sometime” [in the past] “alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death...” Those who *used* to be alienated, who *used* to be enemies, against whom God *used* to have an indictment, have been reconciled to God by the body of Christ’s flesh *through death*. This relates also to Hebrews 2:9 where the author said, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Justification and reconciliation are tied to Christ’s death.

2. CHRIST’S BLOOD

By way of synecdoche, the term “blood” stands for Christ’s death or for “shedding of blood.” A synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part stands for the whole. It is not just that Christ had blood; it is that he *shed* his blood — that he *died*. We are not talking about “blood” as though it were a magical substance. When we refer to Christ’s “blood,” we refer to his death. We refer to the fact that he *shed* his blood! It is not just the substance of blood; it is his blood *shed* that redeems. In Ephesians 1:7 we read, “In whom we have redemption through his blood.” What price has Christ paid to *redeem* us, to *buy* us back, to *reconcile* us, to *justify* us? He paid his blood. It is a fact that he not only was broken in body, but that he also shed his blood. Matthew 26:28, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is *shed for many* for the remission of sins.” Romans 5:9, “Much more then, being now justified by his blood.” Acts 20:28, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

3. CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE

In Romans 5:19 we read, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made" [constituted] "sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made" [constituted] "righteous." I translated the Greek word "*kathistemi*" [in the King James translated as "made"] as "constituted." Do not be confused as though Christ's obedience somehow *infused righteousness into us*. That is not what is in view in Romans 5:19. What is in view is that God looks at us *as though we were obedient*. "Constituted obedient" is a better understanding of Romans 5:19. "By one man's disobedience." Adam is the one man who was disobedient. Did *we* eat of the fruit of the garden? *We* were not there. *We* were not personally disobedient; it is by *his one act* that we were *constituted sinners*. God regards us as fallen; he regards us as corrupt; he regards us as guilty *because* of that one sin. So it is by parity of reason or analogy at Romans 5:19, that *because* of one man's obedience we are now *constituted* righteous. Christ is the one man who was obedient. By that one man who was obedient, we are now *constituted righteous*. We are not *made* righteous in the sense that everything we do from now on is a righteous act. We are not personally righteous. We are not able to obey the law perfectly. We are constituted righteous in the sense that *God sees us in Christ*. We are *counted as* righteous. Just as we were *counted as* sinners in Adam, we are *counted as* righteous in Christ. We are counted as righteous on the account of one man's obedience. *Our* righteousness is thus tied to *Christ's* obedience. Hebrews 5:8-9, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." He, by his obedience, constituted all those who obey him righteous.

The righteousness that we have is not a righteousness of our own. Even though justified, we do not live by our own righteousness. The righteousness in which God sees us is *always* Christ's righteousness. Theologians often characterize this as an "alien righteousness." "Alien" in this context means "from outside ourselves." It is a righteousness not from within,

but from outside, ourselves. At what point, then, does justification become dependent upon the works that we do after our justification? Never! Some teach that God justifies us for Christ's sake and then after that we persevere in our *own* righteousness by our *own* works. That is a mistaken notion. It is a notion that leads right back to Rome. Christ's righteousness is *the only* righteousness which God sees. Proverbs 21:4 teaches that an unbeliever plows the ground over here and a believer plows the ground over there: in one case it is sin and in the other it is a righteous act. What is the difference? It is not in the act of plowing! It is because God sees one of them in Christ and not the other.

We must understand that even our works of thanks, even our law-keeping out of gratitude toward God, is only acceptable to God because of the righteousness of Christ. Isaiah 45:24-25, "Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Let me say, children, that if you grab hold of those two verses, you will know more theology than 90% of evangelicals today know. "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified." It is only by his righteousness; *it is only by the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us that we are justified*. 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him" [the "he" is God the Father; the "him" is Jesus Christ] "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Christ has himself borne our iniquities. God has laid our guilt and the punishment due to us upon Christ. But he does not stop there. He "who knew no sin" has been made sin for us. *He has been made a sin offering for us* with the result "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." What righteousness do we have? We have an altogether *alien* righteousness; a righteousness that is not ours by nature. It is not infused into us. It is a righteousness that is credited to our account. It is a righteousness that does not belong to us. It belongs to Christ, but we have been made — constituted or accredited — the righteousness of God in him.

This forensic transfer reconciles the fact that God is still a righteous God; he can still be just; he can still punish sin and yet *at the same time* justify the ungodly. We try to justify the ungodly. We sometimes say that it does not matter if you are a murderer. We have some awful judges in this country who do that quite a lot. But we cannot do that and *still be just*. God is still just, because he is punishing sin, but he is punishing our sin in the person of Christ. That is why I have emphasized *so much* the voluntary nature of Christ's undertaking in the covenant. For God just to drag someone else out and punish him for us *would* be unjust! There has to be a *voluntary undertaking* on the part of Christ, the Lamb of God, who became sin for us, and then his righteousness is imputed to us. Not as a *result* of faith! As soon as we make justification a *reward for faith*, we have completely thrown off the Reformation doctrine of *justification by faith*. In Philippians 3:8-9, Paul had just given a list of all the things that he had in his favor. He had every thing the world has to offer. Yet Paul said, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Notice "*not having my own righteousness*." The righteousness that God imputes to us has nothing to do with our personal righteousness! Thus our righteousness is not our *own* righteousness anymore than Paul's righteousness was *his own*. Paul said, "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Our righteousness is an *alien* righteousness; it is a righteousness from outside ourselves. It is how God *sees* us. It is the righteousness of Jesus Christ; it is the righteousness of God, and that means that it is not our *own*! Paul said he counted everything else as dung. Some of you children live in the country and know what a dung heap is. It is a rubbish pile. It is the compost heap! It is refuse; it is trash. Paul said

that all these things that the world counts as good, all the things that the Pharisee counts as *righteousness* — being from the *right* family, going to the *right* schools, belonging to the *right* nation — he counts them as *nothing*, as *dung*, as *worthless* because they cannot establish true righteousness. If we count on our righteousness *even a little bit*, then we do not count entirely on Christ's righteousness. Our righteousness has to be completely Christ's. It is only as we are *found in him*; only as his righteousness is *imputed to us*, that we have *right standing* before God.

4. CHRIST'S NAME AND KNOWLEDGE

Children, do not belittle the fact that Christ's name has been placed upon your forehead in your baptism. Christ's name is the name *by which* all those who are justified shall be justified. In 1 Corinthians 6 Paul gave a list of very wicked sins. Then he said at verse 11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." We are justified in or by the name of Jesus Christ. Not by our own name, not by Paul's name, not by Apollos' name, but only by the name of Christ can we be justified. We must recognize that our justification is altogether tied to the mediatorial work of Christ, which is what is intended by this term. In Luke 24:47, Christ sent his disciples into all the world, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached *in his name* among all nations..." That is the great commission. The great commission is to go forth and preach repentance and remission of sins *in his name*. Acts 10:43 reiterates, "To him give all the prophets witness, that *through his name* whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." That reconciliation, that taking away of the guilt and punishment due to us for our sins is through the blessed name of Christ.

Isaiah 53:11, "...by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." This is not only a knowledge that Christ has; it is a knowledge that we have of him. This is a genitive of content, not a genitive of source. Although the knowledge is from him (John 1:11), that is not what is in

view in this verse. What is in view in this verse is that the content of our knowledge, the content of the teaching that we must have, is a knowledge of Christ. Our justification does not come because we are good five point Calvinists; there may be many lost Calvinists. It is because we *know Christ!* We have cast ourselves upon him! In John 17:3, as Jesus prayed his great High Priestly prayer, he said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” *If we are to have life eternal, we must know Christ.* Do we have to know Calvin’s Institutes? No! What do we have to know? “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” It is not just that we know about some person that we have invented in our imagination that we *call* Jesus. We have to know Jesus Christ who is the Jesus Christ *revealed to us in the Bible*; the one God the Father *sent* and no other. We must know the true and living God; the only true God, and the living Christ whom he sent — not some other Jesus Christ of our own imagining. It is by his knowledge, by the knowledge of him, by casting ourselves upon him alone that we are justified. It is not merely an acknowledgment that there was a man named Jesus who walked along the shores of the sea of Galilee. It is a knowledge that is of a personal, intimate, and friendly nature. We have cast ourselves upon him and have determined to know him through the pages of the Bible. We read Isaiah chapter 53 for the purpose of knowing Christ; for the purpose of understanding him who is the lover and friend of our souls.

In the previous sections I have tried to show that our justification is *always* connected to Christ and to his work. *He is our life.* Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Christ alone is the life of the believer! Christ is also our *peace*. Ephesians 2:14, “For *he* is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” Peace with God is not just a commodity. Peace with God comes from trusting *in Christ*

alone. The peace of God increases and decreases. We find that peace from God does often wax and wane. In fact, chapter 18 of the Westminster Confession does not say that this is normal but it *does* say that we ought not to be surprised if it happens. We are told in the previous article that assurance of salvation can be ours; we can have it. It is not the brass ring that you are never quite able to reach. This assurance can be ours! It is an *infallible certainty* that we are God’s and that he is ours. But article 3 of chapter 18 tells us “This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith,” [that is to say, to the being of faith itself] “but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation,” [not revealed to us by some inner light, or special revelation] “He may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto.” What are “the ordinary means?” The ordinary means are the Word, sacraments and prayer. We must make use of those ordinary means of grace to have the infallible assurance of peace with God. We find in Romans 5:1, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” The normal fruit of justification is peace with God. The Westminster Confession continues, “And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness.” That last phrase is the answer to the fallacy that if I know that I am saved I can live any old way I want. That is far from being true. In fact just the opposite is true. The more assured I am of God’s love, the more thankful I am and the more stirred up I am to the duties of obedience.

Christ is our righteousness. In Jeremiah 23:6, Christ is characterized as “*Jehovah Tsidqenu.*” — “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” — Christ is our righteous Jehovah. But he is not just our righteous Jehovah. He is also *Jehovah our*

righteousness! Christ is our hope. As Christ is formed in us, Paul characterizes him as our hope of glory. Colossians 1:27, "...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ is our joy. John 15:11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

As we look at the various affections of the Christian life, we find them centered in and sourced from Christ, not in ourselves. We do not — and we must not — look to ourselves. We must always look to Christ. *His* righteousness is ours; *his* joy is ours; *his* life is ours; *his* peace is ours! In the righteousness of God displayed and declared in the punishment of Christ — as God is both just and the justifier of the ungodly — the very flaming sword of justice that hung over our heads becomes a shield and buckler to us. The very righteousness of God is displayed in Christ's punishment for us. Christ has been punished; he has poured out his life unto death; his blood has been shed; his obedience has been accepted by God; he was raised again *for our justification!* God accepted Christ's sacrifice! We need not wonder if God accepted his sacrifice or not. In being raised from the dead, God's acceptance is displayed and declared. Know this fact: *God is impressed with only one man who ever lived, and that man is Christ!* Therefore, if you would have *peace with God*, if you would have *assurance of salvation*; if you would be *justified in his eyes*, you must be *found in Christ*. You must fly to him. You must rest altogether upon Christ. *If you are trusting in anything else, then you are yet in your sins.* I can say that without fear of contradiction from God's Word. If you are trusting anything but Christ, you will not know the peace of God. You will not know *his* assurance. There is nothing in you that can give you that kind of assurance. It is impossible.

Our justification is also directly connected to the *glory* of God *in Christ*. This is a marvelous thing. God has declared that he will not share his glory with another; yet our justification is tied to the manner in which God has chosen to glorify himself in Christ. He is glorifying *both* his justice *and* his mercy. His attributes are seen to harmonize in his plan of salvation. He

demonstrates himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: the Father who plans our salvation and who justifies the ungodly; the Son who takes upon himself the punishment due to us for our sins; the Holy Spirit who brings us to God and sanctifies us through belief of the truth. All three persons of the Godhead are glorified in our justification. If we look to ourselves for *any* part of our justification then we are asking God to *share* his glory.

The majesty of God's *love* is glorified in justification. God could not wink at our sins. God would not merely *say* that we simply needed more love. On the contrary, our sins *required* punishment. Our sins *required* that God's wrath be poured out. But Jesus Christ has taken the punishment due to us for our sins. And because Christ has taken the punishment due to God's holy law away from us, God's law is set forth before us, not as something that we can properly neglect, but as something that is glorious. It is shown forth as the holy standard by which God will in fact judge the world.

You must throw yourselves upon Christ. He alone can save. In Matthew 11:28-29, Christ said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Jesus said, "Come unto *me*"— not "Come unto Pastor Bacon," not "Come unto the church," not "Come unto your baptism," not "Come unto your own law-keeping," but "*Come unto me.*" "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Would you have rest for your souls? It is only found in one place, and that is in Christ. It is not found in your law-keeping. It is not found in an imparted righteousness. Rest is only found in the righteousness of Christ of which Paul spoke in Philippians 3:8-9 not having his own righteousness, but rather having the righteousness of Christ. ☞

(See available Justification Tract and Tapes on next page).

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The Psalter Committee of FPCR and Blue Banner Books present this work with the desire that many of God’s people will have His Word in their mouths day by day and week by week. There are numerous reasons for singing the Psalms. At the top of the list is the simple reason that these are the very songs written by God the Holy Spirit. Further, Christ has promised to sing them together with his people in the midst of the great congregation (Hebrews 2:12 cf. Psalm 22:22). Finally, we should sing the Psalms because they are the Word of God. We rejoice to hear the very words of God found in our mouths, and the mouths of our seed and our seed’s seed, just as God promised in Isaiah 59:21. It is our earnest desire that more of the Reformed community can experience this covenantal, generational promise as a result of our work on *The Comprehensive Psalter*.

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More Tapes, Myanmar Missions Report.

Myanmar Missions Report

Online at www.fpcr.org.

While it did not make the deadline for this issue of *The Blue Banner*, please see our website for a report by Dr. Bacon on the work FPCR is doing with the Myanmar Reformation Presbyterian Church. There is not much of a reformed witness in the country of Myanmar (Burma), but this new denomination is committed to changing that, and they need and have asked for our help.

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Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

The Westminster Confession at 24:5-6, reads in part

In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage: yet, nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.

This teaching is challenged today by many in the evangelical community. Is this part of the confession in error? Some allege that it is too strict and some say it is too loose. Pastor Bacon examines these statements of the Westminster Confession in his new series of sermons on *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*. This in-depth 16-tape series begins at the beginning with the marriage of Adam and Eve and continues on to examine the Biblical doctrines regulating marriage, divorce and remarriage in light of both the Old & New Testament.

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Importance of Education for Covenant Children.

From Directory of Domestic Duties series (Tape 21, see the advertisement at the end of this article).

By Richard Bacon

PARENTAL PREREQUISITES.

In the original covenant that God made with Adam, God gave Adam dominion over the earth and told him to be fruitful and multiply. In the commandment to be fruitful and multiply, Adam, even in an unfallen state, was required to bring up his children to understand their callings before the Lord. We who are fallen are also required to raise up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is a normal part of our Christian life. But to be able to accomplish this command, Christian parents have to begin with certain attributes in our lives before we can communicate those attributes to our children.

1. GENUINE PERSONAL RELIGION

First, parents must have genuine personal religion. I am using the word religion in the sense of doing what God has called us to do. It must be personal, it must be genuine, and it must be according to God's law. We must have it to be able to teach it. We must have a habit of following God. We might term this "habitual holiness." This does not mean that a parent must be perfect before he or she can teach a child. However, they must be inculcating in themselves, as well as in their children, a habit of holiness. They must have a habit of following after the Lord; a habit of walking with him; a habit of doing what God requires. We might term this "habitual obedience." The habits of a parent's life must be such that when he speaks to his child, the child does not see something different from what he hears. What the child sees in the life of his parents and the instructions he receives from them must agree.

2. DISCRIMINATION

The second qualification that parents must cultivate in themselves is the ability to discriminate. I am using the word "discriminate" in the old way. "Discrimination" is to have the ability to divide that which is good and proper from that which is bad and improper. To discriminate means to mark a difference. If we are going to raise children we must be able to discriminate between what they do that is good and what they do that is bad. We must be able to tell the difference between good and evil. We have to have insight into our children's behavior. We have to watch them. We have to observe them. We have to know when they are telling the truth and when they are lying. Children sometimes lie to their parents. Even children of the covenant have lied to their parents. Some parents, when they were children, did the same thing. Parents must have the insight to be able to listen to their children carefully enough to know when they are telling us the truth and when they are not. We need to be able to discern when their motives are what they ought to be and when they are not. If we do not cultivate that ability; if we do not cultivate that discrimination; we will not know how to admonish our children. We will be correcting them when they ought not to be corrected; and we will be leaving undone correction that ought to be taking place.

3. PRUDENCE.

The third thing that we need to cultivate in ourselves is prudence. This is a virtue that we must first develop in ourselves so that we can nurture it in our children. Today, the word "prudence" is almost never used, but in the past, it was considered a virtue. Prudence simply means "good sense." Prudence is the ability to

look at a situation, recognize the situation for what it is, and then apply godly wisdom to it. We need that. We must have that in our own lives if we would cultivate it in our children.

4. FIRMNESS

Fourth, we must have firmness. This does not mean cruelty. Nor does it mean that we beat our children until they submit to our wills. But neither does it mean that we indulge them. Firmness simply means that we do not indulge their appetites. It means that we do not give in to them. It means that just because there is a tear in their eye, we should not repent of what we have done *if* what we have done is the right thing to do. We must be firm and not indulgent.

5. CONSISTENT

Related to that firmness, we must be consistent. If a parent handles one child differently than he handles another child, it can be a source of bitterness and resentment between the children or between the child and his parents. We must be consistent also from one time to another. If an action deserved punishment on one occasion, the same action will likely deserve punishment on a second occasion. The lack of consistency brings ambiguity and uncertainty toward parents, discipline and sometimes even God’s law. It is almost guaranteed to provoke a child to anger.

6. PROPER GOAL

Finally, we must know what our goal is in the instruction of our children. What is the desired end of our correction? What do we hope to accomplish in our admonishments? We must know for what purpose we train up our children. Until we have that goal firmly in our minds, our discipline will lack true direction and focus.

In Proverbs 22:6 we are told to “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” We are not told to train up a child in the way he should think or train up a child in the way he should speculate or train up a child in the way he should dance or train up a child in the way he should do art. We are told to train up a child in the way he should *go*. We

are training our children for living. We are training our children to be doers of God’s word. We are training our children to be walkers in God’s way. Therefore the goal that must always be before our eyes is the spiritual welfare of our child and the glory of God. God is glorified in our raising of our children with their spiritual interests ever before our eyes.

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A Publication of First Presbyterian Church Rowlett
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Volume 10 Number 4 — October / December 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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