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In this Issue.

James Durham on the Second Commandment, Part One of Two ❀
Arrows in the Church's Quiver ❀ **Psalm Singing Remembered** ❀
Catechetical Instruction by A. A. Alexander ❀ **Hints for Psalm Singing**

by Richard Bacon

Longtime readers of *The Blue Banner* know without introduction that James Durham (1622-1658) was a famous Scot of Second Reformation days. The first of a two part article containing his exposition of the second commandment is taken from his book *A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments*. Durham's view of the second commandment, far from being unique, is the view of Reformed Christianity generally and of the Westminster Standards in particular. Also dealing with worship issues, there are two articles – one by a longtime Psalm singer and another by a relatively recent Psalm singer – dealing with song in worship. The article by Rev. H. Leverne Rosenberger, retired RPCNA minister, recounts the way in which God led him into Psalmsinging and has kept him there through his 75th birthday. The article by Mr. Tim Baker is written from the perspective of one who has only recently begun singing the Psalms, but sees the advantages of the practice. Mr. Baker's article is full of practical advice for those who have only recently begun singing Psalms, containing particular reference to the use of *The Comprehensive Psalter*, which is still offered for sale by Blue Banner on page 35.

Two other articles in this issue deal with the subject of the catechism of the church's youth. In a day in which churches around the country and around the world are striving to be "seeker friendly" and "make the gospel relevant," many may be missing the most obvious tool that the church has: catechetical instruction of the young. The review, *Arrows in the Church's Quiver*, beginning on page 22, is an endorsement of Donald Van Dyken's book, *Rediscovering Catechism*. The book is short, timely, and strong both theoretically and practically. The article by Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), first professor of Princeton Seminary, contains exhortations to catechize not only the youth of the church, but all her members and officers as well. ❀

The Second Commandment.

Part One of Two. From: James Durham, *A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (Dallas, TX: Naphtali Press, unpublished). Copyright © 2001 by Chris Coldwell.

By James Durham



Exodus 20:4-6. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

This commandment is more largely set down than the former, partly to clear the mandatory part of it, and partly to press it, in which two it may be taken up.

The preceptive, or commanding part, is expressed in two things at the beginning. 1. That no image be made (Ex. 20:4). And 2. That it be not worshipped (Ex. 20:5).

Next, it is pressed three ways: 1. From a reason; 2. By a threatening; 3. By a promise. The words are multiplied, that they may the more fully and clearly express what is intended.

First, That this commandment is against all making of images for religious service, is clear from a threefold extent mentioned in the prohibition. 1. The image of nothing *in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or under the earth*; that is, the similitude of no creature is allowed for this end.

2. Men are forbidden to make either *similitude or likeness*; that is, no sort of image, whether that which is engraven in, or hewn out of stone, wood, silver, etc. or that which is made by painting; all kinds are discharged.

3. No sort of worship or religious service is to be given to them, whether mediate or immediate,

whether primarily as to themselves, or secondarily with respect to that which they represent. This is understood under the second part of the commandment, *Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve or worship them*; under which two all external reverence is discharged. Which is clear from the reason adjoined, because God is *jealous*, and he will not only not endure idolatry, but whatever may look like it; as a jealous husband will not abide any suspicious-like carriage in his wife.

That we may have the clearer access to the meaning and use of this commandment, let us see, 1. What is the scope of it. 2. Wherein it is different from the former.

1. The scope of this commandment is not merely and only to forbid making and worshipping of images, which is the most gross way of abusing the worship of God; but, under that, to forbid all manner of grossness in the external worship of God, and to command exactness and preciseness in it (as well as internal worship) according to the rule prescribed there[about] by the Lord. And so this commandment includes all externals commanded in the ceremonial law, and forbids all will-worship and superstition in the worship of God, all honoring him by precepts taught by men, and not by himself (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:9). So then, in the first commandment, the worshipping of the only true God is commanded, and the worshipping of any idol is forbidden; here the true worship of that God is prescribed, and the contrary forbidden. The first commandment shows who is to be worshipped; the second, how he is to be worshipped; not in the manner that heathens worshipped their idols, nor in any other manner that men shall feign and

devise to themselves, but in the manner he himself prescribes.

In sum, this commandment holds forth these three things:

(1) That God will not only be served inwardly in the heart, by good thoughts and intentions (which is prescribed in the first commandment), but also outwardly, in the confessing him before men, in external service and worship, in suitable words and gestures. For the forbidding this sort of external gestures, worshipping and bowing before idols, includes the contrary affirmative in all its kinds (according to the first rule before-mentioned for the right understanding of all the commandments). Thus it takes in all ordinances of word, prayer, sacraments, ceremonies, etc. and failing in these, breaks this commandment, when even they are not rightly gone about.

(2) It holds forth this, that, in that external service and worship, God will not have men following their own humor, but will have them to walk by the rule given, or to be given by him to them; and otherwise it is in vain whatever worship men perform to him (Matt. 15:9). Hence it is said here, *Thou shalt not make to thyself* — that is, at thy own pleasure, without my command, otherwise what is by God's command is made to him; and this is to be extended to all ordinances, yea, both to the worship itself, and also to the manner of that worship, all is to be done according to God's command only.

(3) It holds forth a spiritual service due to God, or that we should be spiritual in all external service. There should not be in us any carnal apprehensions of God, as if he were like anything that we could imagine (Acts 17:29), as is fully clear from Deut. 4:15, etc. Also all rashness and carnality in external performances is here discharged under *bowing to images*.

So then, under these three, we take up the sum of this commandment; whereby it differs from the former. Which may also be cleared from these reasons:

The *first* is, that this commandment looks to external worship, and the ordering of that; which is clear:

1. Because the things forbidden in it, as making of images, and bowing to them, are external acts.

2. These are mentioned as relating to God's worship; for they are placed in the first table of the law, and for this end images are only mentioned as made use of by heathens in all their worship (Lev. 26:1). The Lord will not have his people doing so to him (Deut. 12:3-5, etc).

3. And, that making and worshipping of images, are but one part of man's abusing of the external worship of God, which is mentioned for all of that kind (as adultery is put for all uncleanness in the seventh commandment) and all kind of false worship, or all the several ways of men's abusing the external worship of God, are condemned under it. (1) Because it is most gross; and, this being a most gross way of adding to his worship, it serves to show how God accounts every adding to his word, or altering of it, to be a gross and heinous sin (Deut. 4:23-25). (2) Because the nations about, especially Egypt, served their gods so, and men naturally are bent to it, as appears almost by the practice of all nations; and (Rom. 1:25, etc), by the Israelites practice in the golden calf (Ex. 32:1-7), and by Jeroboam's practice (1 Kings 12:28). Now, the Lord will not be served so, but as he commands (Deut. 12:4): *Ye shall not do so to the Lord*, etc. but contrarily (Deut. 12:5), as the Lord shall carve out unto you.

A *second* reason, to clear this to be the meaning, may be taken from the perfection of the law, which lies in this, that it condemns all sin, and commands all duties. Now, it is a sin, not only to worship false gods, but to worship the true God in a false way; and it is a duty also to worship him rightly, according as he has appointed in his word. Now, these sins must be forbidden in this second commandment, or they are forbidden in none at all; and these duties must be commanded in this commandment, or they are commanded in none.

Next, That we may clear that it is sinful to worship God otherwise than he has commanded, it would be observed, there was a twofold idolatry found in Israel; and condemned in the scripture. The *first* was when groves and images were planted, and made to idols; and so the people of

Israel did often to the heathen gods. The *second* was when they had groves, and worshipped in high places, but not to idols, but to the Lord their God, as 2 Chron. 33:17, so in that place before cited, Deut. 12:2-4, etc, you will find two things forbidden. 1. Making of images to the false gods, which the Canaanites worshipped. 2. Making use of their manner of worship, and turning it unto the true God. Both are forbidden; the first, by the first commandment; the last, by the second. Compare Deut. 12:8. (which holds forth this scope) *Ye shall not do every man what seemeth right in his own eyes*, with what follows, and with Deut. 12:30-31. *See thou enquire not how these nations worshipped their gods*, to wit, by images, etc. *as if ye would do so to the Lord*: no, but (Deut. 12:32), *Whatsoever thing I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it*. Which clears the scope of this command as being purposely there opened up, *Ye shall not do so to the Lord your God*; wherein more is comprehended than is expressed, namely, not only you shall not serve the Lord as they do their gods, but also you shall serve him as he himself prescribes.

Hence will it clearly appear, that this command is to be reckoned a distinct command from the former; because: 1. It contains distinct matter, forbids sins of another kind, and commands duties of another kind. 2. Because they are certainly ten in number, and there cannot be such a reckoning made up, if these first two be one; it being clear (as after will appear) that the last is only one, and cannot be divided into two. 3. Beside, it is the common reckoning of the ancient Jews, as may be seen from Josephus (lib. 3. 9), Ainsworth, and others. This then being laid down as a truth, we shall, I. Shortly put by some questions concerning images, for clearing the words. II. Come particularly to show what is required and what is forbidden in this commandment, and how we break it in our ordinary practice. III. Then open the reasons that are annexed.

Concerning images two things are to be enquired; [A.] If no image is lawful; and, if any is lawful, what [are they]? [B.] If any use, especially religious, of images is lawful? And if adoration of

any kind is to be given to them? We say for answer,

[A.] 1. That making of pictures of creatures, which are visible, or may be comprehended, or historical fancies (to speak so) such as the senses and elements [commonly are] held forth by (which are rather hieroglyphics than real pictures); these, I say, are not simply unlawful but are so when they are abused. So Solomon made images of lions for his use; and thus the gift of engraving and painting, as well as others which God has given to men, may be made use of, when (as hath been said) it is not abused. As:

(1) When such pictures are obscene and filthy, and against Christian modesty to behold, such break this commandment, but more especially the seventh; because, as filthy communication pollutes the ears, so do they the eyes. (2) When men become prodigal in their bestowing either too much time, or too much expense on them. (3) When they dote too much on them by curiosity. (4) And many other ways they may be abused; but especially, in the fourth place, if they be abused to any religious use, then they become unlawful, as afterward shall be cleared.

2. Though making of images simply is not unlawful and discharged by this commandment, yet thereby every representation of God (who is the Object to be worshipped) and every image *religiously made use of in worship* is condemned (though civil and political images and statues, which are used as ornaments, or badges of honor, or remembrancers of some fact, etc. are not condemned). (1) Because such images cannot but beget carnal thoughts of God (as Acts 1:7, 29), contrary to this commandment. (2) Because God discovered himself (Deut. 4:15-16, etc), by no likeness, but only by his word, that they might have no ground of likening him to anything. (3) Because it is impossible to get a bodily likeness to set him out by, who is a Spirit and an infinite Spirit. So then, every such images must be derogatory to God, as turning the glory of the invisible God to the shape of some visible and corruptible creature; which is condemned, (Rom. 1:22-23), for every image supposes some likeness. Now, there can be no conceivable or imaginable likeness betwixt God and anything

that we can invent; therefore it is said by the Lord (Isa. 40:18): *To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?* Where it seems it was no idol, but God they aimed to represent by their images, which was the fault condemned (Isa. 40:25). As also, when we cannot conceive of God, and of the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation, as we ought, what presumption must it be to paint them?

Therefore, upon these grounds, (1) We simply condemn any delineating of God, or the Godhead or Trinity, such as some have upon their buildings, or books, like a sun shining with beams, and the Lord's name, Jehovah, in it, or any other way. This is most abominable to see, and a heinous wronging of God's majesty.

(2) All representing of the persons as distinct, as to set out the Father (personally considered) by the image of an old man, as if he were a creature; the Son under the image of a lamb or young man; the Holy Ghost under the image of a dove: all which wrongs the Godhead exceedingly. And although the Son was, and is man, having taken on him that nature, and united it to his Godhead, yet he is not a mere man. Therefore that image, which only holds forth one nature, and looks like any man in the world, cannot be the representation of that person which is God and Man.

And, if it is said, 'Man's soul cannot be painted, but his body may, and yet that picture represents a man;' I answer, It does so, because he has but one nature; and what represents that, represents the person. But it is not so with Christ; his Godhead is not a distinct part of the human nature, as the soul of man is (which is necessarily supposed in every living man) but a distinct nature, only united with the manhood in that one person Christ, who has no fellow: Therefore what represents him, must not represent a man only, but must represent Christ, Immanuel, God-Man. Otherwise it is not his image. Besides, there is no warrant for representing him in his Manhood; nor any colorable possibility of it, but as men fancy. And, shall that be called Christ's portraiture? Would that be called any other man's portraiture, which were drawn at men's pleasure, without regard to

the pattern? Again, there is no use of it. For either that image behooved to have but common estimation with other images, and that would wrong Christ; or a peculiar respect and reverence, and so it sins against this commandment that forbids all religious reverence to images. But he being God, and so the Object of worship, we must either divide his natures, or say that image or picture [does] not represent Christ.

Again, as to what may be objected from the Lord's appearing sometimes in the likeness of a man, or the Spirit's descending as a dove, or as cloven tongues of fire: It is answered:

(1) There is a great difference betwixt a sign of the Spirit's presence, and a representation of the Spirit. (2) Betwixt what represents the Spirit, as he is one of the persons of the blessed Trinity, and what resembles some gift of his. The similitude of a dove descending upon Christ, was to show his taking up his residence in him, and furnishing him with gifts and graces, and particularly holy simplicity and meekness without measure; and so his appearing in cloven tongues was to show his communicating the gift of tongues to the apostles. (3) Neither is there any warrant for drawing him in these shapes, more than to look on every living dove as representing him. And the like may be said of God's appearing sometimes in human likeness; it was but that men might have some visible help to discern something of God's presence, but not to give any representation of him; and these bodies were but for a time assumed, as a prelude and fore-running evidence of the Son's [becoming a man].

From this ground also it would seem, that painting of angels might be condemned, as a thing impossible, they being spirits, which no corporeal thing can represent. Beside that, the representing of them has some hazard with it: and for those cherubims that were made by God's direction under the old testament, they were rather some emblem of the nature and service of angels, as being full of zeal, and always (as it were) upon wing ready to obey God's will, than any likeness of themselves. And 'tis hardly possible to fancy representations of spirits, good or evil, but thereby men will wrong themselves in

the right description of them, though we grant angels, being but finite spirits, there is another kind of danger and impossibility of representing God who is an infinite Spirit. Also, some say, that these cherubims mentioned did not represent the nature of angels, but angels appearing under such a visible shape. And we find (Ezk. 1), there are divers shapes by which they are pointed out, but it is as to their fitness and readiness for service, and not as to their nature.

3. We say that no image whatsoever, made use of for religious ends, and without [outside] the bounds of civil and politic uses, is allowable; but is by this commandment condemned as unsuitable to the Lord's nature and revealed will. So by this, images (otherwise lawful) when abused to idolatry, become unlawful, and are not to be suffered, but orderly to be removed. We call that more than a civil or a common use, when religious worship or reverence is purposely intended to them, or there is by some one occasion or other, danger, lest they may be so abused. And of this sort (*viz.* dangerous ones) are (1) *Images in places of worship*; but it is not idolatry to have dead men's images on their tombs or monuments in churches. (2) Images of such angels, saints, etc. which have been abused to idolatry by being worshipped, or most readily may be so abused. (3) Images erected for helping our prayers to be accepted, and which have altars, lights, or temples appointed for them (which will be clearer when we come to speak of religious worship and *bowing*); thus peregrinations and vows to images, touching of them with some apprehension of fruit and advantage thereby, especially when healing is expected from them; and so are they abused also, though help be expected, not from the image, but from him whom it is said to represent. And thus also, when any image, once lawful, comes to be abused, it ought to be removed, as the brazen serpent was by Hezekiah: and, under this prohibition, come in the images of false gods, as Cupid, Venus, Apollo, Jupiter, etc, which were once abused. Besides, some of these idols being nothing, the portraying of them makes them appear something. And if it was the Lord's way to command the breaking and destroying of all idols

and images of false gods, can it be suitable to retain them in memory, that a generation following might have that occasion and help to idolatry (*viz.* the images of old idols) from Christians? And if it was David's and the saints way (Psa. 16:4), not so much as to mention their names, but with detestation; ought God's people for sport or delight to look on these images? Zeal for God would abhor these curiosities; and what edification can be in them?

[B.] We are now to clear the *second* question, *If any worship may be given, and what worship is due to images of any sort? and if it be not a breach of this command to give any religious worship to any of them?* That we may answer,

1. Consider, there was a twofold worshipping of images, even among heathens. (1) The first was more gross, when the worship was given to the image, as being some godhead of itself. Thus some think the images of Baal, Ashtaroth, etc. and particular images, that have special names, were worshipped. Thus are men said properly to worship the works of their hands. This is against the first commandment. (2) There was a worshipping of images as representing God, and so the worship was gone about as a part of service done to the true God; such was (in conformity to the heathens practice) the worship given to the calf (Ex. 32:1-7), and such were the groves and sacrificings in the high places (2 Chron. 33:17). More particularly, there is an immediate worshipping of images as idols, when they in themselves, or for themselves, are worshipped: And *secondly*, there is a mediate worshipping of images for that which they represent, when men worship something in them, or signified by them.

This again may be distinguished with respect to the object, when the worship is directed either first to a false god, or else secondly to the true God.

2. Consider, that there are diverse sorts of worship given to the images of the true God, or of saints. (1) Some religious worship which is more than civil, yet not that which is due to God; such Bellarmine gives them for themselves properly, and calls it *δουλεία*.

(2) A divine worship due to what is typified, such many give to the images of God and Christ. This they call λατρεία. This Bellarmine gives them, not properly, but *per accidens & propter aliud*: though the first he makes properly to terminate on the image, yet Aquinas and his followers (Part 3. q. 25. 3. 4), give the images of Christ, of Mary, and of the cross λατρεία, properly so called.

3. Consider what this is which is called religious worship. It differs from civil and politic[al] worship (such as is given to living men; yea, from that civil respect which one will give to the image of a king, or of one they love, which is not properly worship, even civil) and consists in other circumstances of a religious consideration; and it may be known to differ from what is civil, by these things:

(1) By the thing to which the worship is given; that is, if it is a thing which passes not under a civil, but under a religious account — as bowing to a living man is one thing, to a saint's image, a sacrament, or such like, which have nothing in them calling for civil honor, is another thing — and therefore, if any honor is given them, it must be on another account.

(2) By the actions wherein we give such worship, as if it be in prayer, or in worshipping of God, or in sacrificing; it is one thing to bow then to or before an image of man, and another thing to do it when occasionally or historically we are relating something, or doing some civil business, as tying the shoe, or such like.

(3) By the sort of worship that has been given to idols, or used in religious service to God, and not suitable, for any civil respect, to such an object; as bowing the knee, uncovering the head, praying, building temples, altars, making vows unto them, or before them, swearing by them, or before them, carrying them about with us because of some religious influence they are supposed to have, setting them up for reverence to be given to them, setting up lights about them, sacrificing, burning incense to them, etc, or something of that kind, used sometime in God's service, or in the service of idols.

4. Consider, that what is said of images may be said of all creatures and things to which divine

honor, or religious worship in the service of God is attributed; for, if the one fail, all will by this commandment be overturned: such as (1) Worshipping of angels or saints by δουλεία, or the virgin Mary by ουπερδουλεία, as mediators and helps in our serving the true God. (2) All adoration of the relics of martyrs, such as their bones, dust, clothes, etc; especially the adoration of the very cross (as they say) whereon Christ suffered, which has by Papists a divine sacrifice offered to it, and a divine worship given it in the highest degree. (3) The adoration of such things as are used in worship, as temples, altars, bread in the sacrament, *Agnus Dei*, masses, etc. (4) The images of God, Christ, saints, angels, yea, of the cross, which are said to be worshipped with respect to the true God, and not as derogatory to his service.

For further clearing of this purpose, we shall speak to a question which here necessarily occurs; namely, *Whether these things mentioned, being worshipped by any sort of religious service, whether directly or indirectly, for themselves, or for such things to which they relate, or which they signify, even when men pretend the worship is not given to them, but ultimately referred to the honor of the true God; whether, I say, worshipping them so, is not idolatry, and a breach of this commandment?*

In answering this question: [A] We shall clear that there may be and is idolatry committed with images, and means of God's service, even in such worship wherein the images which men worship are not accounted gods, but only representations of God; and although these means of worship, which they worship, are made use of in serving the true God. [B] We shall clear that all such service, as being idolatry, is forbidden by this command, however it is distinguished, if it is performed as religious service; though some service be more gross, and other some more subtle and refined.

[A] First then, [we may clear in divers ways] that there is such a kind of idolatry in worshipping of images, when men rest not on the images, but direct their worship to the God represented by them.

And 1. From the heathens, who though some did, yet all of them did not account their images their gods, but only some representation of them. And (1) We may gather this from Rom. 1:22-23, where it is said of them, [1] That they *knew God*; and yet, [2] That they *turned the glory of that incorruptible God into the similitude of beasts, and men, corruptible creatures*. Their fault is not that they accounted those representations or images which they made, gods; but that they declined in their worship, in the worshipping of the true God by such images.

(2) It may also appear by the frequent changes of their images, while they retained their former gods; and by their multiplying images of one sort, and divers sorts, to one and the same god; and by their giving all these images one name. And when it is said, that Solomon and other kings set up images to Ashtaroth, Baal, etc; it cannot be thought they supposed these images to be the very gods themselves which they worshipped, but that they were only set up for their honor (2 Kings 23: 13). And when Manasses made chariots to the sun, he supposed them not to be the sun (2 Kings 23:11). Yea, was not this commonly acknowledged, that Jupiter was in heaven (as appears, Acts 19:39)? And that that image came down from him, but was not he, nor yet the feigned goddess Diana?

(3) It may appear by the heathens' own confession, and the shifts they used when they were charged with the worshipping the works of their hands. As [1] They used to say, they worshipped but the *Numen*, or god which was in them, and which invisibly after their dedication of them (and not before) dwelt in them. [2] Yea, some of them would say, they neither worshipped that image, nor any devil, but by a bodily sign they beheld what they should worship. [3] When Christians further urged them, that what was signified by their images, was not the true God, but a creature; as by Neptune, the sea; by Vulcan, the fire, etc; they replied, it was not those bodies which they worshipped, but the gods which governed them. So Augustine, Psa. 113. *nobis* 115, concerning the idols of the Gentiles, and Augustine, *de Civit. Dei, lib. 7. cap. 5*, where he shows that Varro gives that reason, why the

gods were rather portrayed in man's picture (though they were invisible), because, he says, man's soul is a spirit, and comes nearest them; and the body is the vessel of the soul, and therefore is used to represent it. See Chrysostom, *1. Eph. Hom.* 18; Andrews on second command; Augustine [upon] Psa. 96 *nobis* 97.

(4) And it may also appear from this, that the heathen gods for the most part (even those of them that were most commonly worshipped), were some famous men, after death supposed to be deified, to whom they made statues and images; and yet still the honor was intended to those to whom they appointed the images, though they supposed that their gods in an especial manner dwelt in these images, and answered from them.

2. In the second place, this may be made to appear from the command (Deut. 12:31), where the Lord forbids not only the worshipping of idols, but of himself by images. *Thou shalt not do so to the Lord thy God*. That is, 'Thou shalt not worship me by images, as the heathen do their gods.' And therefore this is not only possible, but is also, and that most certainly, a grievous guilt, even though they pretended it was not idols, but God they worshipped; yet it was not so; they worshipped not him, but the idol.

3. We shall clear it yet further, that the true God may be worshipped (by idolaters) as they pretend; and yet in God's account their worship is nothing but idolatry committed with their images.

We shall give four instances of this. 1. The first is from Exodus 32, where it is clear, (1) that the image they set up was not itself acknowledged to be God, but as something to represent the true God. For [1] It cannot be thought their minds were so soon darkened, as altogether to forget what God had done, and to imagine that the thing which was new made with hands, was God, though they be charged with forgetting God, because they were practical forgetters of him, and their sin did speak it out indeed. [2] The image is called Jehovah, that brought them out of Egypt, which was a mercy past before the calf had a being. And therefore the reason why they gave it

this name, must certainly be because they aimed by it to represent Jehovah. [3] It is not likely that now they would have worshipped the gods of Egypt, or that they would have attributed their delivery from Egypt to them, seeing these gods were also plagued; also, that Aaron should do so, is incredible, who yet joined with them in this transgression. [4] Beside, can it be thought that so soon they thought it to be God, and yet so easily afterwards passed from it? Certainly the words, *That it may go before us*, that is, not to Egypt, but Canaan, whither God called them, do clearly imply that they looked on it only as a representation of Jehovah.

(2) It is clear that they sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings before this image; and this was the same service which was due to the Lord; and so it was proclaimed (Exod. 32:5), and therefore it was to the Lord, and not to the image (for itself) that they sacrificed.

(3) It is clear that they are charged for *turning out of the way*, and that because of their *making a molten image*; which seems to infer that their guilt was rather in the manner of worship, and making of that image for worship, than in quitting God altogether. and thus they grossly failed in the manner of worshipping him, by occasion [the absence] of Moses; for now they want that sign of God's presence which formerly they had, and have not such a visible commerce (as it were) with God. It is that they complain of, and this want of a visible sign (and not of God simply) do they intend to make up by this image.

(4) This may be further confirmed from Acts 7:40-42, where it is said, that because of this sin they were given up to gross idolatry; which could not be, had this been idolatry of the grossest sort.

2. The second instance is from Judges 17, where you will find that that idol, which Micah made, is not by him or his mother accounted God, but is made use of by them, as they think, for furthering them in God's service; as appears: (1) From this, that it gets not the name of any strange god. (2) That he seeks a Levite for a priest to it, and promises to himself God's blessing from that; not that the idol would bless him, but Jehovah (Judg. 17:13). (3) That it is said, the

priest asked counsel of Jehovah for the Danites (Judg. 18:6).

3. The third instance is that of Jeroboam, who did sin, and made Israel to sin, by the calves he set up at Dan and Bethel. That they were not intended to be worshipped as idols for themselves, but as means whereby they might be helped to worship the true God, may appear:

(1) From Jeroboam's motive, which was not to divert the people from the true God, at least as he supposed, or to make them alter their God, but to alter their manner of worship, and to divert them from going up to Jerusalem to worship, from which his fear of their revolt to Rehoboam arose. Hence the calves are not provided to prevent worshipping of God, but are put in place of their going up to Jerusalem; as the color of reason pretended by him for this alteration, shows. And so, one service is put for another, without changing their God. As all the reproofs that his sins meet with from the prophet run at this, that he altered the manner of God's worship in putting up new signs in new places, and appointing new sacrifices and priests.

(2) It appears from this, that as it was distinct from that way of serving God, which was in Judah; so was it from the way of the heathens; yea, from the way used by such idolatrous kings as Ahab, who are said to do worse, because they did set up strange gods (which the calves are not called) and Baalim; and Jehu, when he destroyed the false gods, yet he retained this manner of worship. And there were no cause to discriminate Jeroboam's sin from Ahab's, or to look upon it as any thing lesser, if all the difference had been only in the change of worshipping the image of one idol into the worshipping of the image of another. But the difference was in this, that the one worshipped the true God in these images, the other idols indeed.

(3) Hence there was still some knowledge of God in that land, and prophets sometimes sent them by the Lord. Yea, when they were led captive, and others sent into their place, it is said (2 Kings 17:26, etc.), *They learned the manner of the God of the land* — that is the true God — though they corrupted themselves with serving their idols

also. And thus the Samaritans continued worshipping *they knew not what*, though they pretended to worship the true God (John 4:22).

4. The fourth instance is that corrupt practice used sometimes in Judah, of setting up high places and groves; when yet they did not thereby intend to serve idols, but the true God. And yet they are reprov'd for this, as a gross corrupting of the worship of God.

And it would seem clear sometimes in Judah, and often in Israel, even when they are charged with idolatry, that yet the knowledge of the true God was not obliterate[d] among them, nor they so brutish in their worship as other nations about them. We take it then for a clear truth, that they often did worship the true God by images, when they did not worship the images directly.

[B] The second thing may be easily cleared and made out; to wit, that all worshipping of God by images, though the worship be pretended to be given to the true God, and not to the image, but to the thing signified or represented by the image, is yet unlawful, and idolatry; forbidden by this commandment, whatever sort of worship it be, if it be religious, as has been said. And this we shall make out by these arguments.

1. The first is from the general scope of this command, which is to forbid not only the overturning of God's service, but also all will-worship, though mixed in with the service (as it seems that was, which is mentioned, Col. 2:8, of worshipping angels, which yet was so subtle, that they pretended they were far from taking from God anything that was his due). That this is the scope of this command is clear from Deut. 12:8, *to do what seemeth good to every one in his own eyes*. But so it is that the worshipping of God before images, etc, is will-worship, etc, till it be shown that it is prescribed by God.

2. That way of worshipping God is clearly condemned by the more particular scope of this command, which is: (1) To discharge all gross thoughts of God or his service; which scope, as it says God cannot dwell in temples, so neither can he be worshipped by men's hands; that is, by images made with men's hands, as these in

Athens did (Acts 17:24-25); for they ignorantly worshipped the true God. (2) To show that he should not be served [by images], as idolaters served their gods (Deut. 4; 12:30-32). This binds us to the word for all instituted worship, as well as from their idols. *Thou shalt not do so to the Lord thy God*. Note, that so set down (Deut. 12:4), relates to groves, images, high places, etc. mentioned, (Deut. 12:3), which place does not only discharge such service to be given to idols, but the giving of any such service to God himself, who will have no such service. And if it is clear that worshipping him by groves and high places is condemned, why not worshipping him by images also; for the prohibition, so, looks to all?

3. This command has a general prohibition in it that leaves no image out, whether of God, saint, or any other thing, for any religious use, under whatsoever shape. For (1) It discharges the making of any image of any thing, for any religious use. (2) It discharges all worship to be given them, whether outward by *bowing*, or inward by *service*, or whatsoever follows on these. And therefore no distinction used by idolaters can salve the matter, or avoid the strength of this command; especially considering that it directs men in the manner how they should serve the true God, and does not simply prescribe who is to be acknowledged as true God, which is done by the first command.

4. If by this command heathenish idolatry, or the serving God by images, is condemned; then the serving of God by images also amongst Christians is here condemned. But the heathens serving God by images is here condemned; *ergo*, etc.

If it is answered, that heathens did represent by their images that which was not God, and that this was their fault; I answer: It is not like[ly] that all did so, nor that any at first did so; but some had a notion of the invisible Godhead (as Rom. 1:28), though they changed it into an image, like to a corruptible creature. (2) Yet here the argument holds; If heathens, who worshipped, suppose, Jupiter, Vulcan, etc, and their images of gold, silver, etc, were held for idolaters, not only as worshipping Jupiter and Vulcan, and these idols which were so represented, but also as

worshipping gold and silver, and such images and things as they made use of to represent them; then also Christians must be said, not only to worship what is represented by those images, but the images themselves, and so to guilty of idolatry on that account. The reason will hold alike in both. And if their exception, that they worshipped not the images, but what they represented, did not exempt them from being found guilty of worshipping such images in particular, neither will Christians upon that plea be found exemed [*freed*] from this guilt; for *a quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*.

5. Fifth argument, if that idolatry committed by the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex. 32), and that which was set up in Israel by Jeroboam, and that of Manasses (2 Chron. 33), are to be condemned as idolatry; then that which is practiced amongst the Papists in worshipping of their images, and God by them, is to be condemned as idolatry. But the former is condemned in scripture as gross idolatry, because it falls off, and declines from the way of worship the Lord has prescribed, and turned God's people like to idolaters in their way. Therefore also the latter is to be condemned as idolatry.

There is no exception, which the Papists give in here against this argument, but the like have been given by the Israelites.

For (1) If they say, they worship not the true God before these images, that is answered already.

(2) If they say, it was condemned because they represented him by such images, that is not enough. For [1] The command forbids all images of any thing. [2] The opposition mentioned, Deut. 4, *Thou sawest no likeness, or image, but heardst a voice*, has no middle, but argues against all alike. Hence these images, *Psa. 115*. that had noses and mouths, but smelled not, and spoke not, were condemned, as well as those complained of, *Rom. 1*.

(3) If they say, it was not lawful then, but is lawful now; this were to say, that the gospel admits of more carnal ordinances than the law; whereas its service is more spiritual without all doubt.

From all which we may clearly conclude that in such service there is a twofold idolatry committed. 1. In that because of some holiness and venerability that is supposed to be in such images, relics, etc, religious worship (though inferior to what is attributed to God) is given to them for themselves, according to the decrees of that second council of Nicea. 2. In that they pretend by such service to worship the true God, though in an idolatrous manner forbidden by him, besides what Aquinas and his followers maintain, who give to the images of God, Christ, Mary, and the cross, λατρεία itself (part 13. q. 25. a. 1, 2, 3). And reason says it is a snare unto them that worship them, and a scandal to others. For as Augustine says (speaking against the expressions used by heathens, from *Psa. 113*, and from that of the apostle, *Rom. 1*, after he had rejected their images, and their interpretation, and excuses also): *He who worships and prays towards an Image, is an idolater*. For, *Who*, he says, *worships and prays toward an image, who is not affected with it, as if it heard him?*

In short then, the idolatry that strikes against this command may be summed up in these particulars:

1. When by some visible sign, representation, or image, the Godhead is wronged, as being thereby made like to it; this is against *Deut. 4:15-17*, where every image, made to represent the true God, is condemned as unsuitable to him.

2. When by our worship we tie the presence of the true God to some place, image, statue, or relic, as if they had something in them, or communicated to them, more divine than any other thing; or, as if God heard our prayers better at images, and by them; or, as if there were a more special presence of God there, or a more special dispensation of grace granted by them, as heathens supposed their gods dwelt invisibly in their images, and did answer them there. Now, the supposing that there is any thing, something venerable and worthy of such respect is the ground of all idolatry. The inward leaning to it, and trusting in it, is against the first command; but the outward expressing of this esteem and trust, is against the second command. Thus men sin in praying to things that are (though rational

creatures) as angels and saints; or to things that are not, or to lifeless creatures, as the cross, bread, etc.

3. It is idolatry, when idolatrous worship, used in the service of idols, is given to God, contrary to his command. So Deut. 12:30-31 — *Thou shalt not do so to the Lord thy God* — and 2 Chron. 33:17, their keeping up of groves for the worship of God, and that invention of Jeroboam's calves, are condemned as idolatry.

4. When anything of that external worship, which is due to the true God, is given to any other; even though it be with a purpose not to shut him out altogether from his due, yet, when it is in part given to any other thing, as to the cross, saints, images, etc, it is called worshipping of them. See Ex. 32, compared with Psa. 106:19-20. There they worshipped the images of gold and silver, etc; yea (Psa. 106:37), devils, though they intended to worship God in these images.

5. When anything of this worship, due to God, is given to servants or means, as if something adorable and to be worshipped were in them, although they be not accounted God himself. Thus Cornelius sinned in worshipping Peter (Acts 10:25-26), when he knew he was not God; and Peter rejected it on this ground, that he was a man, and not God; and that therefore it was due to none but God. Which reason rakes off all that can be said by men for palliating this kind of idolatry. Thus the scope of the command, and the reason and ground of worship being considered, it is evident that all these are idolatry.

II. We would now further consider, *first*, the positive part of this command; and *next*, what is forbidden in it.

And, *first*, For the positive part of this command, we conceive it reaches, 1. To all external ordinances, such as doctrine, worship, government, and discipline: We are here enjoined to keep all these pure, according to his word. Thus any error breaks this command, when it is vented and made public, as secret errors break the first.

2. It reaches to all external obedience, such as, receiving the truths of God, submitting to the

government and discipline of his house, entering therein as Church-members, often hearing the word, not only on the sabbath, which is required in the fourth command, but at all occasions, when God shall give the opportunity, it being a special part of his worship; right using of the sacraments, and worthy receiving of them; praying externally, internal prayer being required in the first command; outward confession of sin, when called for; confession of the truth in times of trial, etc. And this obedience is to be extended to extraordinary duties, as well as ordinary; as vowing, swearing, fasting, etc. when they shall be required in providence; external covenanting with God, an ordinance necessary for keeping pure public service, etc. Also it is to be extended to secret duties, and to provide duties in families, and Christian fellowship, as well as to public, and to diligence in them all.

3. It reaches to the right manner of doing duties; especially it requires it, (1) That they be not done in hypocrisy, for God will not be so worshipped in any duty. (2) That all our worship and duties be directed to God in and through the Mediator; and that none come to God but by him, who is the appointed High Priest. (3) That all our obedience and service be spiritual.

4. It takes in all external gestures, and outward reverence in praying and hearing, etc, as that the eye be fixed, and the carriage not light, but decent; that there be no laughing; that the looks be stayed and grave; these in a special manner, in worship, are to be looked unto.

5. It requires every means that may further God's public service; as educating and training up men for the ministry, entertaining them, providing places and accommodations for public worship, and everything of that kind without which the external worship of God cannot be performed.

6. It requires the removing of all lets [*hindrances*] and impediments of God's worship, or whatever is contrary thereto, according to our places and stations; such as heresies and heretics, by condign [*appropriate*] censuring of them; removing all idolatrous worship, and whatever may be occasions of it, or whatever has

been, or may be abused to it; purging the house of God from corrupt and insufficient ministers and corrupt members.

But let us see, in the *next* place, what is forbidden in this command, and how it is broken.

In the first command, what immediately reflects upon God himself is forbidden; here, what immediately reflects on his ordinances and appointments, contradicting them, and him in them, is discharged. There is none of the commands more frequently broken, and yet men most readily think themselves free of the breach thereof; and therefore you should consider that it is broken:

1. In doctrine, or doctrinally. 2. In practice. 3. In both, when the doctrines vented and published against truth, have external practices following on them, as that doctrine of image-worship has, which we have spoken to already, and is the gross breach of this command; and the Lord instances it as being the greatest, because, where this is, all sorts of idolatry are. For it supposes idolatry against the first command, and that some esteem and weight is laid upon that creature we worship, beyond what is its due; as if there were in it some divine or ability to help, whereby it is thought worthy of such honor; whereupon follows that external worship which is given to it upon that account. And so, because saints are thought able to hear and help, men pray to them; and, because the cross is thought holy, men worship it, etc. And as this idolatry is manifold among the Papists, so it is palpable when prayer is made to saints, relics, bread, the cross, images, etc.

1. Now, that we may further explain this, consider, that this command is three ways broken doctrinally (all which have a great influence upon men's breaking of it in their practice); or, the service and worship of God is three ways wronged by the doctrines of men. (1) When something is added to his service, which he has not commanded; and this is superstition and will-worship largely so taken. Of this kind are, [1] The five Popish sacraments added to those two the Lord appointed. [2] Other and more mediators than the one Mediator Christ. [3] More

meritorious causes of pardon and justification than the blood and merits of Christ. [4] More officers in his house than he has appointed; such as, bishops, cardinals, etc. [5] More ceremonies in worship, as salt, spittle and cream added in baptism to water, and kneeling, etc. in the Lord's Supper. [6] More holy days than God has instituted. [7] Other things to be acknowledged for the worship of God than the scripture, as the traditions, *Apocrypha*, etc. and many such things, whereof (for the most part) Popery is made up.

(2) It is broken when his ordinances are diminished, and anything which he has commanded is taken away from them, as is clear from Deut. 4:2. *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought therefrom.* And thus they break this command by taking away the cup from *laics* (as they call them) in the Lord's Supper, and the use of the Bible from the people in their own language. Also it is broken by taking away baptism from infants, and discipline or excommunication from the church, and by taking away the Sabbath day and public singing of psalms, or such like; not to speak of that blasphemous, and some-way Pagan heresy of *Quakerism*, overturning most, if not all the ordinances of God, destructive to all true religion and Christianity, and introducing, at least having a native tendency to introduce, old Paganism and barbarity.

(3) This command is broken by corrupting of God's worship; as when the word is misinterpreted and misapplied, prayers are used in a strange tongue, the word is mixed with errors, and the church both left without discipline, and abused in civil things, which tends to the corrupting of God's service; unqualified men put into the ministry, and kept in it; when sacraments are rested on and worshipped, even as the brazen serpent was abused; and the temple, though appointed by God at first for good ends, was afterward rested on and idolized.

2. Again, this command is practically broken four ways. (1) By gross profanity, and neglect of the practice of known duties of worship. This way

are guilty all profane contemners of sacraments, word, discipline, etc; all neglecters of them when they may have them; and all these that set not themselves to go rightly about them, in secret, in families, or in public. And when many opportunities of gospel-ordinances are, this sin is the more frequent. And so all atheists that contemn religion, and these that would only serve God with a good heart and intention, as they pretend, without any outward worship, are condemned here; and also those, who for fear or advantage give not testimony to the truth and ordinances of Christ, when such a testimony is called for.

(2) Men sin against this command, when they practice will-worship and superstition, in serving God by duties he never required. Whether [1] It be will-worship in respect of the service itself; as when that is gone about as duty, which is not in itself lawful; as when such and such pilgrimages and penances are appointed by men to be done as service to God.

Or [2] When worship or service under the gospel is astricted to such a place, as if it were holier to pray in one place than in another, and that therefore God did hear prayer there more willingly and easily than in another place.

Or [3] In respect of bodily posture, as if there were more religion in one posture than in another; as in receiving the Lord's supper kneeling, or praying in such and such a posture, except in so far as it is decent, and otherwise rightly regulate by rules of prudence and nature's light.

[4] When it is without a divine warrant tied to such a time only; as Christmas (commonly called Yule) Easter, Pasch, etc. which is an observing of times that God has not appointed.

[5] When it is tied to such an occasion or accident, as to pray when the clock strikes, or when one neeses [*sneezes*], which Plinius marked of Tiberius, who was no religious man, yet could not abide one who lifted not his hat when he [*sneezed*], and said not, 'God bless;' and he observes it among these things he can give no reason for: The prayer is good, but the timing of it so, and astricting it to that thing, is

superstitious. So your light-wakes and dirges (as you call them) are upon this account to be condemned, either as superstitious, or as profane, or at the best as the relics and causes or occasions of both: For {1} Once in times of Popish darkness they were so used, or rather abused. {2} Why are your visits stinted to such a time more than another? It profits not the defunct [*deceased*], and it hurts the person you come unto; a multitude not being fit for comforting or instructing. And yet it cannot be called a mere civil visit, being trysted [*joined*] with such an occasion; but certainly it suits not, nor is it a Christian carriage toward the dead, and after the burial of the dead, to spend time together in such a way as is commonly used. Beside, it is superstitious when a thing without reason is astricted to such a time or occasion, as giving and receiving gifts on New-years-day, too common amongst Christians, though a heathenish custom which day, as Gratian observes, was dedicated to their devil-god, Janus. He asserts likewise, that such Christians as in his time did observe it, were excommunicated. And Alcuin, with others, write that the whole catholic church appointed once a solemn public fast to be kept on a New-years-day, to bewail those heathenish interludes, sports, and lewd idolatrous practices that had been used on it.

[6] When some weight is laid on the number of words, or set repetitions of prayers, *Ave Maria's*, or *Pater noster's*, or on the reading so many chapters, or saying so many prayers.

[7] When any take a word of scripture at the opening of the bible, or by a thought suggested, as more befitting their condition because of that, without weighing the word itself, and lay more weight upon that word than upon another that has the same authority and suitableness to their case; which is to make a weird [*fate*] or fortune-book of the book of God, for which end he never appointed it. Thus also men are guilty when they account sacraments more valid, or lay more weight on them, because dispensed by some ministers, than when dispensed by others, though having the same warrant, or because of the difference of persons that partake therein with them.

However some of these things may be in themselves good, yet they are abused by some one circumstance; as in unwarrantable timing them, or in laying that weight on them which is not warranted in the word. Which, [1] Alters the way that God has laid down. [2] Brings us to prefer one circumstance to another, without any warrant. [3] Makes a necessity where God has left us free, and so brings us into bondage.

(3) We may go wrong in practicing lawful duties many ways, as to the manner of performing them, when they are not so done as is required. As [1] When we do not propose to ourselves the right end we should have before us. [2] When they are not done from a right inward principle. [3] When they are done in hypocrisy and formality, and rested on. All which may go along with men in all duties and ordinances; and generally all our shortcomings in the right manner of commanded duties strike against this commandment.

(4) We may also consider the breach of this command, by taking a view of what is opposite to everything required; and so want of reverence in worship, want of zeal against error or false worship, not stretching ourselves in all lawful endeavors to entertain and maintain the true worship of God, are here forbidden. So likewise the putting in, and keeping in unworthy ministers; the traducing, holding out, and putting out of faithful men; the withdrawing and sequestering their maintenance from them; the diminishing of it, or straitening them in it. Horrid sins, though little thought of, and lightly looked on by men, drawing no less deep before God than obstructing the free course of the gospel, breaking up the treaty of peace betwixt God and sinners carried on by faithful ministers, as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ and saying on the matter, that he shall not see of the fruit of the travail of his soul in the salvation of the souls of men, to his satisfaction, so far as they can impede it, by outing and discountenancing his ministers, the instruments made use of by him for bringing that about. And thus also, all sacrilege, simony, and the like, come in as breaches of this command; and all partiality in church proceedings, toleration of errors,

countenancing the spreaders of them, slighting of discipline, conversing unnecessarily and unwarrantably with such as are excommunicate, and all unwarrantable innovating in the external worship of God; and when we are not aiming and endeavoring to have our children and servants, and all under our charge, brought under subjection and conformity to the ordinances and service of God, as well as ourselves.

But, because this command in an especial manner looks to public ordinances, let us see a little more particularly how it is broken in these. [A] In respect of preaching and hearing. [B] Public prayer. [C] Praising. [D] Sacraments. [E] Fasts. And in all these, there are faults of three sorts. 1. Some going before the performance of these duties. 2. Some following after. 3. Some going along in the performance of them. And again, 1. Some are guilty of the breach of this command, by neglecting these duties. 2. Some are guilty in the wrong manner of going about them.

[A] And, first, before hearing the word, men break this command, 1. In not praying for the speaker.

2. In not praying for themselves, in reference to this end, that they may profit by the word.

3. In not setting themselves to be in a spiritual composed frame for such a work.

4. In not watchfully preventing what may divert them or distract them, or straiten their minds when they come to hear; not ordering their other affairs so, as they may not be a hindrance to them in meeting with the blessing of the gospel.

5. In not aiming to have the right esteem of the word.

6. In not blessing God for it, or for any good received before by it.

7. In not coming with hunger and thirst, as newborn babes, having laid aside what may hinder its being received with desire (2 Pet. 2:1-2).

8. In not denying our own strength as to the right discharge of that duty, that so we may make use of Christ.

9. In not minding, that when we are called to hear, it is to tryst [*meet*] with God in his ordinances.

10. In going to hear with prejudice.

11. In coming without expectation of, and longing for the presence of God, or of meeting with him.

12. In not coming from respect to the honor of God, nor out of conscience, but from custom, and for the fashion.

Secondly, men sin against this command, when they are come to hear, and while they are about this duty of hearing:

1. In not looking to God, or not receiving the word as God's word, but as man's.

2. In *extravagating*¹ and wandering in their minds and thoughts (Ezk. 33:31).

3. In sleeping when they should hear.

4. In letting the word slip out of their mind, and not retaining and laying up what they hear.

5. In not yielding their ears and memories, or yielding only their ears and memories, but not casting open their hearts to the word, to let it sink down in them.

6. When though it be heard, yet it is not understood (Matt. 13:13).

7. When, though understood, it is soon forgotten.

8. When there is not a peculiar trembling and fear in our waiting upon the ordinances (Isa. 66:2; Eccl. 5:1-2; and Mal. 2:5). There is a special fear which we ought to have *before his Name*.

9. When there is not faith mixed with hearing, giving credit to the word; it must be a great fault not to believe God's word when we hear it (Heb. 4:1-2).

10. When we fret and canker at the reproofs of the word.

11. When we needlessly stumble at any expression; especially, when we carry so lightly

as to laugh at what is spoken, to the prejudice of the ordinances.

12. When we are more for knowing than for doing; more for informing the mind, than for reforming the heart and life.

13. When there is carping at the word, or censuring of it rather than ourselves.

14. When we make no application of it to ourselves, and try not whether we have such a fault, or if we perform such a duty, etc.

15. When we are not present, as before God, to hear, as Cornelius was (Acts 10:33).

16. When we itch after novelty of expressions, or words, or things, rather than *thirst after the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby*.

17. When these novelties are more entertained and laid weight on than known duties or truths.

18. When the word is heard with respect of persons, and the same truth, or expression, or scripture cited by one, is not so respected and received, as when spoken by another; contrary to James 2:9.

19. When there are vain looks, as well as idle thoughts.

20. When there is a wanton, light, irreverent carriage.

21. When there is immodest and strange apparel unbecoming that ordinance.

22. When there is speaking or talking, out of the case of necessity, in time of sermon, though it were by way of prayer, it is sinful, except it were ejaculatory in reference to what is at present spoken.

23. When there is reading of something (even though scripture) unseasonably.

24. When there is insisting on good thoughts, that tend to divert from hearing.

25. When men are observing vanities in time of hearing, such as the apparel that others have on, or the painting that is on the house, or the couplings of the roof, or such like.

¹ [Ed. *Extravagant* – To deviate in discourse from the proper subject; to speak incoherently as one deranged. Jamieson.]

26. When there is not an intermixing of ejaculatory prayer for ourselves and others; and the speaker, that God would help him, and them, and us, to keep such a word to the time when we may have need of it; and when God is not blessed when a word is rightly spoken.

27. When there is any quenching of convictions, or the motions or stirrings of affection wakened up by the word.

28. When there is diverting to a doting love of the speaker, or the thing as spoken by such a speaker, or the manner of expressing; and a delighting in these, more than in God, or a respecting of him or our own profiting.

29. When we do not look upon, and make use of the preached word as a means to convert, but only as a means to confirm.

30. When we do not make use of promises offered in preaching, and directed by God to us by an authorized ambassador, and do not so lay weight on them as from him.

31. When we reject the many sweet offers of the gospel, and come not to the marriage of the King's Son.

32. When we do grieve God's Spirit, who presses it upon us.

33. When we tread underfoot Christ's blood by our little esteem of it.

34. When we give no credit to, nor lay due weight upon, threatenings.

35. When we have not the faith of God's providence, or of the Judgment to come.

36. When there is not an accepting of Christ.

37. When there is not employing of him.

38. When there is not reverence in removing from our hearing of the word.

[Thirdly] After hearing also there are many ways whereby we are guilty of the breach of this command.

1. Forgetting what we have heard.

2. Letting the heart unnecessarily look back again to other objects, and follow other thoughts, and not meditating on what has been heard.

3. Not comparing what we have heard with the scriptures.

4. Not following the word with prayer for the watering of it.

5. Needless falling to other discourses immediately after hearing of the word.

6. Casting it all aside as to practice (Psa. 50:16-23).

7. Fretting at some things that have been spoken.

8. Spreading censures.

Or 9. Commendations of the thing preached, or of the instruments that preached, as if that were all.

10. Not following the word with self-searching, prayer, and fruits suitable, endeavoring to practice what is required.

11. Not trembling at its threatenings, nor forbearing what was thereby discharged.

12. Not helping others to make use of it.

13. Not repenting of faults committed in the time of hearing.

14. Little delight in remembering of it.

15. Finding out shifts to put by its directions or challenges.

16. Applying them to others rather than to ourselves.

17. Misconstructing the minister's end in pressing of them.

18. Misinterpreting his words.

19. Misreporting, or misrepresenting them.

20. Not being troubled, or fruitlessness in hearing, without any use, but being as a stone without sense or feeling.

21. Leaning on hearing, as if having been in the church were a piece of holiness, though no fruit follow on it.

22. Profane abusing words of scripture, or phrases used in preaching, in men's common discourse; much more when they are mixed in wanton and profane sports, or jests and gibes.

All these ways men may sin when they come to hear the word; they sin also by absence when they come not, neglecting the opportunities of the gospel. There are also diverse sins which men are often guilty of in reference to hearing, even on weekdays. As 1. Little love to the word, or delight in the opportunities of it on such days. 2. Too much love to some other things, that procures lukewarmness in hearing. 3. Contemning occasions of hearing the word on such days. 4. Improvidently bringing on a necessity on ourselves that we cannot hear. 5. Caring little to have a ministry, whereby we may be instructed at all times; and therefore we want [*lack*] such occasions. 6. Setting ourselves, and using our wits to discourage the ministers we have. 7. Not being weighted with our absence from weekday sermons. 8. Mocking at them who are present. 9. Disrespecting the ordinance for some worldly or personal respects, preferring any sinful trifle thereto, etc.

[B] Secondly, let us instance the breach of this command in public prayer, which is a part of worship which very nearly concerns the glory of God; and certainly, when it is wronged through the unsuitable and not right discharging of this duty, this command is in a special way broken.

We shall not here look to everything, but especially to what concerns public prayer. Indeed we fail also in secret prayer, and in giving thanks, both alone and in our families. 1. By contempt of this excellent ordinance. Many slight prayer in secret and in their families (Jer. 10:25), which is a clear breach of this command, as well as neglecting it in public, when men do not countenance sermon or prayer, though at the same time walking idly in the streets or in the fields. 2. By calling up of prayer to others, reproaching it, calling it hypocrisy, and those who use it hypocrites. 3. By mocking the Spirit's work in prayer.

First, before we come to prayer, we sin, 1. By not watching to keep the heart in a frame for praying always.

2. By not watching over every opportunity that we may have for prayer, whereby many occasions are lost.

3. In not longing for opportunities of prayer.

4. In not stirring up ourselves to seriousness when we are about to pray.

5. In letting the heart run loose when we are about other things, which indisposes for prayer.

6. In having a selfy [*selfish*] particular end before us in our prayers.

7. In our little respecting God for strength and fitness, and little looking to him for his Spirit to ourselves, or these who are to go before us in this duty of prayer.

8. In our little examining ourselves that we may know what to pray for, and what distinctly to confess.

9. In our not meditating on what we are to say, that we may, as to the matter of our prayers, speak in faith.

10. In aiming more to find and exercise gifts, than to have grace acting in us.

11. In our rushing rashly on such a weighty and spiritual duty.

Secondly, in prayer. And, first, on the speaker's part there are diverse ways whereby this command is broken.

As 1. By rashness and senselessness, not exercising the spirit, but the mouth; telling over our prayers as a tale without life.

2. Praying in our own strength, without looking after the influence of the Spirit.

3. Not drawing near to God by faith in Christ, but leaning too much on our prayers, from a secret false opinion or prevailing more with many words well put together, than by exercising faith on Christ, and resting on him, as if God were persuaded with words.

4. Inadvertent praying, uttering unadvised petitions and expressions without understanding.

5. Not praying humbly and with soul-abasement.

Nor 6. Singly to please God, but men, seeking expressions that are pleasant rather than sensible.

7. Saying many things we think not; not being touched with the weight of sin when we confess it, nor with the desire of holiness when we mention it; counterfeiting sometimes liberty and boldness, sometimes restraints and complaints more than is real.

8. Limiting God in particular suits.

9. Cold in what is of greatest concernment.

10. Want of reverence and holy fear.

11. Want of a right impression of a present God.

12. Not praying for others, and little respecting the condition of those we pray with; or, what we do of this kind, is either but cold, and for the fashion; or, if there be more apparent zeal and seriousness for others, it would be adverted that it be not upon design to flatter and please them, rather than to obtain spiritual blessings to them.

13. Desiring things for satisfying ourselves more than for God's honor.

14. Breaking off before we come to liveliness and liberty, having begun lazily, and without life.

15. Not insisting to wrestle with God when under bands.

16. Precipitating with the words before the heart ponder them, or the affection be warmed.

17. Posting [*hastening*] through it, as duty, only for the fashion, without respect to God, or love to the exercise, or driving at any profit by it.

18. Wearying, and not delighting in it.

19. Not aiming at God's presence or sensible manifestations in it, or at hearing in that which we pray for.

20. Being more desirous of liberty in public than in private.

21. Fretting when we are put, or kept under bonds.

22. Growing vain and light when it goes well with us, and turning carnal and unwatchful when we get liberty.

23. Impertinent making use of [the] words [of] scripture either ignorantly or vainly.

24. A secret expectation of something for our prayer, and so resting upon the work done, as if there were merit in it.

25. Using expressions not easily understood.

26. Using indecent gestures, and scurrile expressions.

27. Not observing God's dispensation to us, nor his dealing with our souls in the time of prayer, that we may conform our suits accordingly, as we find many of the saints have done, who end in songs after they had begun sadly.

28. Not praying with fervency for Christ's kingdom, and for Jews and Gentiles.

29. Exercising gifts rather than grace, when we pray. These are sins upon the speaker's part.

Next, you should consider the sins of them that join. And, beside what is general and common in the duty of praying, we fail often in joining.

And 1. In this, that many think when another prays they need not pray, but let the speaker be doing alone.

2. When we observe not what is spoken, that we may go along in what he prays for, and be upon our watch that we may join, and that we may do it in judgment.

3. The mind wavering or wandering, and we hearing, but not praying.

4. Censuring the words or gestures of the speaker.

5. Fixing our eyes or minds on some other things, and giving way to other thoughts that may divert from joining.

6. Sleeping in time of prayer.

7. Confusedness in that exercise, and not distinctly joining with what agrees to ourselves,

and our own case, nor with what agrees to others joining with it for them.

8. More cold and indifferent in what concerns others, than in what concerns ourselves.

9. More careless of being heard and answered when we speak not, as if we were less concerned, thinking it enough to be present, although in our heart we join not; and not being affected with the prayer of another, nor acting faith in it, we soon weary when others pray.

10. Not being edified by the praying of another, nor taking up our sins in his confessions, nor our duty in his petitions.

11. Much hypocrisy in such duties, while we seem to be joining, but are doing nothing.

12. Not endeavoring to have affections, suitable to what is spoken, stirred up in us.

13. Not praying that the speaker may be suitably guided and helped in bringing forth petitions that may answer our wants.

14. More indifferent that another who speaks, as mouth for the rest, want liberty, than when we are put to speak ourselves, although it be God's ordinance.

15. Not rightly touched with any expression we cannot join with, but rather stumbling at it.

16. Our being ignorant of the meaning of many expressions through our own fault, so that we cannot join in them.

17. Muttering words of our own, and not joining with what is said.

18. Indistinctness in consenting, or saying, *Amen*, at the close.

Thirdly, after prayer, both speaker and joiners fail: 1. That they watch not over their hearts, but soon return to other things, as if then they might take liberty.

2. Not waiting for an answer, nor observing whether prayers be answered or not.

3. Not being thankful for answers when they come.

Nor 4. Entreating and pressing for an answer, if it be delayed.

5. Not reflecting on our failings, whether in speaking or joining.

6. Not remembering what we have uttered in prayer, but presently returning to a carriage that is very unlike those things we have been speaking before Him.

7. Not keeping up a frame for new opportunities of prayer.

8. Not pressing after a constant walk with God betwixt occasions of prayer.

9. Resting on prayer after we have done, and thinking something of it, if we seem to have been helped to pray.

10. Carnally heartless and displeased, if it has been otherwise.

11. Not being humbled for the sinfulness and defects of our prayers.

12. Not having recourse by faith to the blood of sprinkling for pardon of these sinful defects.

[C] We are to consider how men break this command in praise and thanksgiving. And here there is a failing in general: 1. In the utter neglect of this necessary duty. Alas! what of that duty do we in secret? And yet it is singularly for God's honor, and as clear a duty as prayer. 2. In mocking praise often, by profaning psalms for our carnal mirth. 3. In neglecting and slighting of it, though not altogether, yet by infrequent going about it. 4. In accounting it to be almost no duty at all, and in being but little challenged for slighting of it, or for irreverent using of it.

Secondly, we sin before we go about this duty: 1. In not preparing for it. 2. In not praying for the Spirit to fit and enable us to praise (1 Cor. 14:15), and for a fixed heart for that work (Psa. 108:1). 3. In our not aiming at a spiritual disposition for such a spiritual duty. 4. In our not endeavoring for a right impression of the majesty of God. And 5. For clearness of our interest in him. And 6. For an impression of the excellency of his way, and meaning of his word; all which are exceeding necessary unto the right

performance of this duty, and without them we cannot praise suitably.

Thirdly, we are guilty of many faults in the time of praising. 1. Doing it without respect to God's glory, and for the fashion.

2. Hypocrisy, not praising him with the whole heart, performing it only with the lips when the heart is away.

3. Ignorance, when we want understanding of the words we express.

4. No suitable impression of God's greatness and goodness upon our hearts when we praise.

5. Not aiming at communion with God in this duty, as desiring, minding, and hoping to praise him forever.

6. Not being taken up with spiritual and heavenly delight in him, and in the work of his praise.

7. Lightness, laughing, or mainly affecting of, and carnally doting upon, some tone or voice, more than being suitably affected with the matter, and making melody in the heart to the Lord.

8. Forgetting what we do sing, and not knowing or considering what it is we sing, the heart not being present nor fixed.

9. Not being constrained by love to praise, but some custom or natural conscience constraining us to it.

10. Not offering up our praises in and through Christ Jesus (Heb. 13:15).

11. Soon satisfied in our praising, as if we were little troubled to be fitted for it; and, because little of ourselves lies in it, we are the less careful how we discharge it, but stint [*curb*] and limit ourselves to some certain customary matter, which puts us to few prayers before, and makes but few challenges after.

12. Not intermixing ejaculatory prayers in our praising.

13. Much hypocrisy, when we sing the cases of others, or their thoughts and estimation of God,

and study not to be something like their frame and exercise.

14. Not framing our affections in praising to the subject of our praise; whether it be some sad case, or some cheerful condition, or some historical or prophetic subject; and, when imprecations are a part of the song, we soon fall off, or praise one and the same way in all.

15. Not serious in blessing God for former mercies to his servants, if it be not so well with us in the mean time; nor cheerfully acknowledging his former deliverances of his church and people, in which we have not personally shared.

16. Not being affected with his keeping of us free of many sad cases we sing, and others have been in; nor blessing him for delivering them.

17. Not letting the word of the Lord, which we sing, sink down in us, for engaging our hearts to, and cheering our spirits in good.

18. Not assenting to, and giving him glory in the acknowledgment of the justness of his severest threatenings, and the most fearful scripture imprecations.

19. Not rightly observing those things that are the subject matter of scripture songs, so as to put a difference between some things we are to tremble and fear at, such as the falls of the saints; and other things which we are to imitate and follow for our edification.

20. Gadding in idle looks, so that some scarce look on their books (although they can read) that they may the better have the sense of what they sing.

21. Not putting a difference betwixt praying a petition that is in a psalm, and singing of it, which should have a sweetness with it, that may encourage us to pray for, and expect what others before us have obtained.

22. Wanting such considerations about the matter sung, when it suits not our present case, as may suitably affect us, and fit us to glorify God in that duty. As when we sing of the eminent holiness of some of the saints, we are to bless him that ever any was so holy, whatever be our

sinfulness; and that we have hope of pardon, though under many failings, and much unlikeliness [*dissimilarity*] to that case we sing.

23. Not singing with the voice at all, although the tongue be given us as our *glory*, that we may therewith thus glorify God.

Fourthly, after we have been about this duty of praise, we sin 1. By falling immediately into a carnal frame. 2. Not looking back or examining, when we have done, how we carried it in praising God. 3. Few challenges for our many failings in praise. 4. Little repentance for those failings. 5. Not keeping the heart right for a new opportunity of praise. 6. Not keeping a record of his mercies in our memories, and upon our hearts, to engage us to praise him. 7. Not walking in this exercise of love, which would sweetly constrain us to this duty, and make us delight in it.

These are but a few of the many iniquities that are to be found in our holy things (Ex. 28:38). It is good we have a high Priest to bear them. O what if all our sins were reckoned, how heinous

would they be! And what a sum will they come to, if our performances of holy duties have so many sins in them! And, when the sins of a Sabbath are counted, how many will they be! Hundreds of diverse sorts, in praying, hearing, and praising; and multiply those to every loose thought, and every declining or wavering of the heart, how many times may they be multiplied! Ah how many unholy words do we let slip! And then, consider all the Sabbaths and sermons, prayers and praises we have had, how many hundred thousands will they amount to! It is sad that men should lie under all these with few or no challenges, or without minding repentance, or thinking of the necessity of employing the high Priest for doing them away; therefore we should accept these challenges, and give him employment, who only can bear the iniquity of our holy things. If this [does not] bring down self-righteousness, and convince you of the necessity of a Mediator, what will do it? ✿

Arrows in the Church's Quiver.

A Review of *Rediscovering Catechism*, by Donald Van Dyken (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers).

By *Richard E. Bacon*



Review: *Rediscovering Catechism* by Donald Van Dyken: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, \$7.00 (114pp. plus appendices), perfect bound.

This book is a real breath of fresh air in the midst of a plethora of books coming from Christian publishers, all claiming to be “practical” and “relevant” for today. What makes this book a breath of fresh air is that it is a biblical approach to the training of the next generation of the church – and so it is for that very reason eminently practical and relevant.

Pastor Van Dyken does not write from the vantage of an ivory tower. Rather, he speaks the pastor's language and helps the pastor to deal with the very real difficulties that arise in the life of a church; difficulties that seem to many to militate against the kind of catechism program of which churches are desperately in need.

The book could easily be divided into three sections. In the first, Van Dyken does his best to encourage his readers that catechising is both biblical and useful. Or perhaps it would be better to say that *because* catechising is biblical, it is *therefore* useful. The author compares

catechising to the older ideas of journalism: using questioning to get to the root of the story. Just as the good journalist uses the “Five W’s” to interview and question their way to answers, so also a good catechist uses questioning and answering to get to the story (or stories) of God’s dealings with men. So, too, lawyers question and probe until they get to the truth of a witness’s testimony. A catechism class will therefore resemble a courtroom as catechist and catechumens together search out the truth by means of questions and answers.

Catechism, while it is undervalued in today’s churches, is really the foundation for the church of tomorrow, i.e. of the next generation. Van Dyken quotes the Preface of the *Genevan Catechism*, “One of the first and most laudable efforts of the Reformers was to revive the practice [of catechising], and restore it to its pristine vigor and purity; and hence, in many instances, when a Church was regularly constituted, catechising was regarded as part of the public service.” Van Dyken continues, “From a human perspective, if the Reformers had not regarded the catechetical instruction of its children one of its foremost responsibilities, the church would not be here today.” Even the enemies of the truth recognized the power of the Protestant example. Referring to the Protestants, the Council of Trent maintained, “The heretics have chiefly made use of catechisms to corrupt the minds of Christians.” Of course, from the Protestant point of view, we would say that the Reformers made use of catechisms to keep the youth of the church from becoming corrupted by Rome and other infidel religions.

Van Dyken’s book is quick to acknowledge the many difficulties that are placed in the paths of ministers, parents, sessions, and even the children that make not catechising far easier than catechising. Even things that are otherwise good and valuable activities can be used to make catechising inconvenient. Soccer practice, band practice, football or basketball games, school activities and even vacations often have a place in the child’s life and if pastors and parents let them, these things can quickly crowd out the importance of catechism classes. A genuine grasp

of the purpose and potential of catechism will help a church place this important activity in the proper perspective.

The second section of Van Dyken’s treatise moves from the importance of catechism to the implementation of catechism. It is important to recognize that catechising is decidedly *not* the same thing as lecturing. The art of catechising is really nothing less than education in its etymological sense. Just as the word “education” comes from two Latin words that mean “draw out,” so is catechism a “drawing out” of the catechumen truths that he has learned. And this is done in a question and answer format. As the Scottish theologian Samuel Rutherford pointed out, “There is as much art in catechising as in anything in the world.”

Van Dyken deals admirably with the objection that some raise that we are making rationalists of our children. Put in another way, there are some who claim that catechists are “trying to take the place of the Holy Spirit.” The catechist must be sensitive to this objection in the sense that we cannot by our own power make believers of our children. Yet, we do not claim that a farmer is trying to take the place of the Holy Spirit because he plants seeds after praying that God would give him a harvest. So, neither should the catechist think he is taking the place of the Holy Spirit when he makes use of means that God has instituted for pressing Christ and the gospel upon the next generation of the church.

Finally, this little handbook has some very useful appendices. The first is a list of the historic creeds, confessions, and catechisms of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches. In the same appendix, Van Dyken lists a large number of catechetical aids that are available from a number of publishers, and the addresses of those publishers are included in a second appendix.

If your church is not currently catechising the youth of the church, it is simply a question of time as to when your church will be closing its doors for the last time. A church that is firing arrows into the next generation must realize that the only opportunity most of us will have to minister to the generations to come will be

through our children and our children's children. That will be done by means of teaching and calling to their remembrance "the wonderful works of the Lord." This book will help a church to begin a catechism class or classes that have just that effect.

If your church already has catechism classes as part of its ministry to the youth of the church, this book will help you to encourage others, both parents and sessions (consistories). It will give you some good practical pointers and will warn you about some of the pitfalls you will encounter.


There is one short-coming of the book that is almost not worth mentioning. Reverend Van

Dyken at one point in his book equates the child's role before God as prophet, priest, and king to his intellect, emotions, and will. We agree fully that every child of God is a prophet, priest, and king. Furthermore, while not endorsing a "faculty psychology," we also would agree that children do have intellect, emotion, and will. Where we would disagree is with the equation of prophet = intellect, priest = emotions, and king = will. Rather, we would insist that the intellect, emotions, and will are involved in each of those believer-offices.

Catechetical Instruction

The text for this article is taken from: "Catechetical Instruction," *Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature* (Dallas, TX: Naphtali Press, 1989). Copyright © 1989. Used with Permission.

By A. A. Alexander

atechetical Instruction must have been coeval with the human family. At first all knowledge was communicated orally, and handed down by tradition. The first man delivered a stock of important ideas to his children; and they again to theirs, with different degrees of ability and fidelity. The most usual place of instruction was, doubtless, for a long time, the domestic circle. Here the pious patriarch would spend much time in dealing out to his listening children the lessons which he had learned in his youth from his predecessors, and those which he had been taught by his own experience. These instructions were properly of the nature of *catechizing*, which may be defined to be *the familiar communication of knowledge orally*. As long as this duty was faithfully performed by parents, the darkness of ignorance and idolatry were prevented, but as soon as it fell into neglect, error and vice must have been the consequence. Of Abraham, God certifies, "I know

that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment (*Gen. 18:19*)." And God, by Moses, insisted more upon no duty than this, of domestic instruction in the truths of religion. "And the words which I command thee shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up." Again, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach thy sons, and thy sons' sons (*Deut. 4:9, 10; 6:7*)."

To these precepts the Psalmist refers, when he says, "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known

to their children: that the generations to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children (Ps. 78:5, 6).”

The word *catechize*, is properly Greek, derived from the verb **katecheo**, *to instruct with the voice*, which is found, in some of its parts, six or seven times in the New Testament, but is commonly translated *to instruct*; because in English, the word *catechize* has somehow acquired a narrower signification than the original term, and conveys the idea of instruction by question and answer; whereas, the word in Greek includes all manner of elementary, oral instruction: and it would be desirable to bring back the word to its original meaning. This, however, is of small moment. The passages in which the original word is found, are the following: *Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; Acts 21:22, 24; Romans 2:18; 1 Corinthians 14:19; Galatians 4:6.*

It appears therefore that this mode of instruction is fully recognized in the sacred Scriptures. Indeed, if no other methods of inculcating divine truth were resorted to, than delivering elaborate and continued discourses from the pulpit, very little information would be gained by the young and the ignorant. Preaching supposes and requires some preparatory knowledge in the hearers, to render it useful in communicating religious knowledge. Elementary principles must be acquired in some other way; and this was more especially the case before the invention of printing, when books were very scarce, and few persons were able to read. It seems that the apostles and first teachers of the Christian religion were much occupied in giving religious instruction, from house to house; and we know from undoubted authorities, that in the earliest times of the primitive church, all who applied for admission into the church, from among the heathen, and all the children of Christians, were carefully instructed by catechizing; that is, by a course of familiar teaching, *viva voce*. To every church a class of catechumens was attached and formed a kind of school, in which the first principles of religion were inculcated, and certain formulas of Christian doctrine, such as the early creeds,

carefully committed to memory, together with portions of the sacred Scriptures. In some places these schools for catechumens became very famous, and were supplied with teachers of the highest character for learning and piety; so that they were frequented by the lovers of sacred literature from other countries. A celebrated institution of this sort flourished for several ages at Alexandria, in Egypt in which Origen was educated, and at which he became the most distinguished teacher. A large number of the treatises written by the fathers, in different countries, and in different centuries, were composed expressly for the instruction of the catechumens. And until darkness overspread the church, and her unnatural pastors deprived the people of the Scriptures, the church was, as it ever should be, like a great school, where holy men of God devoted their time to the instruction of the rising generation, and of converts from paganism.

In catechetical, or elementary instruction, the grand secret is, *little at a time and often repeated*. Whoever would successfully instruct children and very ignorant adults, should avoid the error of crowding too many things into their minds at once. It is as preposterous a practice as it would be to attempt to increase the activity, vigor, and size of the body, by cramming the stomach with as much food as it could hold. Moreover, the truths first communicated should be as simple as possible. Tender minds must not be fed with strong meat, but with pure milk. To accommodate instruction to the state of advancement in knowledge, and to the degree of development of the mental faculties, is certainly that part of education which is most difficult, and at the same time the most important. That historical facts should form the commencement of a course of religious instruction, is indicated, first, by the method pursued in the Bible; and secondly, by the predilection of all children for this species of knowledge. But at a very early period, moral and doctrinal instruction of the most important kind may be connected with the scriptural facts inculcated, and may always be most advantageously engrafted on them. Doctrinal catechisms are, it is admitted, not

commonly understood well by children; but it can do them no harm to exercise themselves in committing the words to memory; for it is universally admitted, that to strengthen the memory, it must be frequently and vigorously exercised: and will it not be much better to have it stored with words which contain the most salutary truths, rather than those which may, by some association, prove injurious on the recollection?

Sometimes the having committed to memory such a system as the Shorter Catechism, is of the utmost importance to an individual when his lot is cast where he has no means of correct information; or in case the person should lose his sight or hearing. We once noticed an exemplification of this in the case of a man of strong mind, who had led a busy life, without much concern with books, and who in his latter years was entirely blind. In conversation on the most important topics of religion, in which he took a deep interest, he would continually recur to the answers in the Shorter Catechism, which he had learned when young; and which now seemed to serve as a guide to his thoughts in all his meditations. But the true reason why so many children learn the Catechism without understanding its meaning, is that no pains are taken to explain its doctrines, and to illustrate them, in a way adapted to their capacity. Parents are, for the most part, either incapable of giving such instruction or negligent in the performance of this important duty. Most parents then stand in need of some helps to enable them to explain the meaning of the Catechism; and such helps have been amply provided, and should be in the hands of every Presbyterian family. We have works of this description by Vincent, Flavel, Thompson, and others of former days; and more recently an excellent exposition of the Shorter Catechism by the Rev. Belfrage of Scotland; and still more recently we have a set of Lectures on the Shorter Catechism from the pen of the venerable Doctor Green, in two volumes, which we sincerely wish might be found in every family in our church, as a work of sound theology, written in a correct and perspicuous style. And while we are recommending expositions of this

excellent little compend, we would not omit to mention with high approbation, the Rev. Matthew Henry's *Scriptural Catechism*, in which all the questions are derived from those in the Shorter Catechism, and the answers throughout are in the very words of Scripture. This in our opinion is an admirable work, and ought to be reprinted and widely circulated. We are also free to recommend Fisher's Catechism, as a valuable doctrinal work, which has been much used in Scotland, and by many Presbyterians in this country. The *Key to the Shorter Catechism*, we also approve, and from the testimony of those who have tried it, we are led to believe, it may be made very useful in aiding children to understand the meaning of words and phrases used in the Catechism.

The old Presbyterian custom of devoting the Sabbath evening, sacredly, to the business of catechizing the children and domestics, in every family, ought to be revived among us where it has fallen into disuse; no other means which have been substituted for this, are likely to answer as good a purpose. Or, if public services in the church are considered on the whole expedient, on this evening, let an hour in the morning, or immediately after dinner be appropriated to this important work. It is as useful to parents, as to children; and is the most effectual method of inducing young persons to commit the Catechism well to memory. And unless this is done, the religious instruction of servants and domestics will be neglected. These family instructions should be conducted with great gravity and kindness of manner; at such times, chiding and scolding should be avoided; and the addresses to the consciences of delinquents should be made with affectionate tenderness.

We do earnestly hope that attention to doctrinal instruction will not be relinquished, nor diminished in our church. Hitherto, Presbyterians have been distinguished above all people in the world, for a correct and thorough knowledge of the tenets of their own church. No people on earth are so well indoctrinated in the principles of religion, and in the proof of the doctrines believed, as the Scotch, and their descendants in Ireland and America. Other

people far exceed them in metaphysical speculations, and in the knowledge of other matters; but for sound religious knowledge, commend us to Scotch Presbyterians of every sect.

The benefits of thorough instruction in the doctrines of religion cannot be calculated. The truths thus received into the mind may prove ineffectual, in some cases, to restrain from open sin; but even in these, the force of the truth is often felt, and the person thus situated, is much more likely to be convinced of the error of his ways than those transgressors whose minds are almost totally destitute of the knowledge of the doctrines of religion. There is, moreover, an unspeakable benefit from the possession of correct doctrinal information, when the mind falls under serious impressions of religion; for then, truths which had been early inculcated, and long forgotten, will revive in the memory, and serve to guard the anxious mind from those enthusiastic errors into which ignorant persons are so prone to fall when they are deeply exercised on the subject of their salvation. Let not the members of the Presbyterian Church, therefore, become remiss in that which has ever been her most honorable distinction; the careful initiation of children into the doctrines of religion, contained in her Catechisms; than which we believe, a sounder system of theoretical and practical theology, cannot be found in any language.

It may appear rather extraordinary, that the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, should have prepared two catechisms, as this seems rather calculated to distract than edify the church. But the history of this matter is simply this. The Larger Catechism was first composed by a committee of three members; Dr. Tuckney, Dr. Arrowsmith, and the Rev. Mr Newcomen; though there is good reason to believe that the first named had the chief hand in the composition. The work was highly approved, but was thought to be too long to be generally committed to memory by children, the committee was therefore directed to prepare a catechism containing the same truths, in a more condensed form. The Shorter Catechism is therefore an abridgement of the Larger, and by comparison it will be found to

contain the substance of the Larger, expressed with more brevity, but containing, for the most part, the very language of the original. It was formerly a frequent thing for young persons of both sexes, in our church, to commit to memory, accurately, the whole of the Larger Catechism. Whether this practice is continued in many of the Presbyterian congregations, under care of the General Assembly, our information is not sufficient to enable us to declare; but we cannot but believe that young persons who have accomplished this object, have acquired a treasure which may be to them of more value than thousands of silver and gold. One thus armed with the panoply of divine truth, will not be liable to be "carried about with every wind of doctrine," and every wild spirit of enthusiasm which may be abroad in the world; and when he reads religious books, or hears discourses from the pulpit, he will not only be capable of understanding them better than others, but will carry about with him a test, by which he can make trial of the correctness of what he hears or reads, and thus be in a situation to obey the apostle's exhortation, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

We cannot be contented to let the opportunity pass of bestowing merited commendation on those denominations of Scotch Presbyterians who are not in communion with the General Assembly, for their indefatigable industry and care in giving doctrinal instruction to their children. In this respect, it must be acknowledged, they greatly excel all other denominations of Christians in our country. Among them, we have reason to believe, there has been no falling off in attention to the Catechisms; and few instances ever occur of the members of these churches being seduced by the insidious arts of the propagators of error and infidelity.

The question may occur to some, To whom does it belong to give catechetical instruction? We answer, to all who are capable of teaching anything of divine truth correctly. But, especially, it is the duty of parents, guardians, masters, school-masters, elders and ministers. All who can be enlisted in the service should be engaged to

teach those more ignorant than themselves. And we feel constrained to give our testimony strongly in favor of Sunday Schools, in which so many persons are employed, so beneficially to themselves and others, in giving instruction out of the Bible. When this is called a new institution, it surely is not meant that any new instruction is given; or that there is anything new in the manner of communicating religious knowledge. The whole novelty of the thing consists in the success of the attempt to engage such a multitude of teachers in giving lessons, and such a multitude of scholars in learning them. But we would respectfully ask, whether parents, and ministers, and elders, have not become more remiss in catechizing since the introduction of Sunday School?

In order to render the public catechizing of children profitable, the pastor of the flock must manifest a deep and lively interest in the exercise. If he should appear indifferent, and attend on catechetical exercise in a formal or careless manner, no great good can be expected to arise from such meetings; but if he will take pains to arrange all the circumstances of such exercises, so as to render them interesting to old and young; if he will propose special subjects of inquiry, refer to proper books, and converse freely with his people on this topic, a spirit of investigation will be excited, religious knowledge will be pursued with diligence and alacrity, and catechizing will be found to be the most effectual means of diffusing correct information on the doctrines of religion.

If common schools were what they ought to be, seminaries in which Christian doctrine was carefully taught, then our schoolmasters would all be catechists, and the children would be trained in the knowledge of God, and their duty. The business of catechizing youth seems also to be one of the appropriate duties of the eldership; for surely these officers ought not to be restricted to mere matters of order and government. As leaders of the people, they should go before them in religious instruction; and it would be an expedient, as it is a common arrangement, to have each parish so divided into districts, that every elder would have a little charge of his own

to look after, the families within which he might frequently visit, and where he might frequently collect and catechize the youth. If ruling elders are commonly incompetent to perform such a work as this, they are unfit for the office which they hold, and can be of little service in the church in other respects. It is now becoming matter of common complaint, that our ruling elders are not generally sensible of the important duties which belong to their office, and are not well qualified to perform them. But how can this evil be remedied? We answer, that the effectual remedy will be found in an increased attention to instruction in the doctrines of the church, by which means many will acquire a taste and thirst for religious knowledge; and whenever this occurs, there will be rapid progress in the acquisition of such a fund of sound theology, as will qualify them to communicate instruction to the young and ignorant. In the mean time, let every pastor meet with the elders of his church, once in the week, for the express purpose of discussing questions which relate to the duties belonging to their office: and thus those who are really desirous of executing their office in a faithful and intelligent manner, will become better and better prepared for their important work every year.

The question has often been agitated whether it would not be expedient to have an order of catechists, whose duty it should be to attend to this whole concern; and the idea has been favorably entertained by some in the Presbyterian church. But to us it appears, that such an office would be worse than useless: for, if the catechist be taken from among the members of the church, where he is expected to officiate, and this must be the case if every church is supplied with one or more, then why not constitute him at once a ruling elder? Surely the mere name of *catechist* would not qualify him to give instruction; and if he is qualified, would he not be as able to teach, if called by the name elder as catechist? And if the office is judged to be expedient, because we cannot obtain well qualified elders, how can it be supposed that competent catechists could be found? The idea of some, however, is, that to perform the duties of catechizing well, requires

much more time than men can commonly afford from their own business; and therefore, proper persons should be employed at a reasonable salary, to devote their whole time to this important branch of instruction. Now all this is very reasonable, and brings us to the very point mentioned before, viz. that schools, among Christians, should have it as their chief object, to bring up children in the knowledge of divine things; and the proper catechists of the church would be the teachers of these schools. If it be said, that school-masters are often incompetent to perform this part of their duty; we reply, that the same thing would be true if they were called catechists; or if other persons were sought for, in the present state of the church, there would exist the same difficulty in obtaining them as there is now in finding well qualified school-masters. The truth is, the church should take pains to train men for this very office; and the parents should set a much higher value on it, than they have been accustomed to do; and the office ought to be rendered more respectable, and more desirable than it is at present.

It may, perhaps, be thought by some, that the prevalence of Sunday schools renders it unnecessary for church officers to concern themselves with the instruction of the youth under their charge. If, indeed, the schools of this description within the parish are under the special superintendence and tuition of the Pastor and Elders, there is no good reason why catechetical instruction should not be given in a Sunday school as well as anywhere else. Catechizing is an exercise peculiarly suited to the Sabbath, and if the officers of any church should agree to conduct this part of the instruction in these valuable institutions, it would certainly be an improvement on the plan on which they are commonly conducted. But when, as is commonly the case, these schools are made up of children of different denominations, and are under the direction of persons not connected with any one church, their existence and prosperity, while it will greatly facilitate pastoral labors, ought not to be considered as a substitute for catechizing. We are afraid, however, that some pastors, as well as many parents, have become remiss in this part of

their duty, from the mistaken idea, that their labors in this field are now superseded. This mistake should be carefully counteracted; and while the benefits of Sunday school are gratefully acknowledged, the instruction of our youth in the Catechisms of our own church should be pursued with increasing diligence.

The old Presbyterian plan of conducting catechizing did not confine this method of instruction to children and youth, but extended it to all persons except the officers of the church. And certainly one of the chief hindrances to the success of catechetical instruction has been that it commonly terminates too soon. When children have arrived at the age of twelve or fourteen years, they take up the opinion that they are too big and too old to repeat the catechism; in consequence of which, until the institution of Bible classes, our youth received no appropriate instruction, in many congregations, in that period of their lives which of all others is most important for improvement in knowledge. While we are strong advocates for catechetical instruction, we are at the same time warm friends to the method of instruction pursued in Bible classes; and we should be pleased to see both these methods of instruction extended to all ages and conditions of men; for who is there that has not something yet to learn? And what upon earth is so worthy of time and pains as the knowledge of God's word, and the doctrines of his wonderful love and grace? Every man who contributes to the increase of this kind of learning by his writings, should be deemed more a public benefactor than he who invents the most useful machine. Let all, then, whom God has entrusted with so excellent a talent as that of writing well on theology, take heed that they do not hide it in a napkin or bury it in the earth; for never was there a time when there was a greater need of good books and tracts to counteract the floods of error which are issuing from a thousand sources; and never was there a period when the effect of good writing was so extensive. By means of the improvements in printing, and the facilities of conveyance in our day, opportunity is afforded of circulating opinions throughout the land; and if religious men sleep, there is no doubt that the

enemy will sow his tares plentifully. Let the friends of truth, therefore, be watchful and wise, and ever on the alert, in seizing opportunities of enlightening the world with the pure doctrines of the word of God. ¶

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Archibald Alexander (1772-1851) Dr. Alexander served the Presbyterian church in several capacities (having been licensed at age 19 in 1794) before being installed as the first professor

at Princeton Seminary in 1812. He strongly affected two generations of ministers in the 40 years he taught there. He was the author of many books, and a frequent contributor to the *Princeton Review*. He has several articles in the set of *Presbyterian tracts* published throughout the mid 19th Century. "It was his rare fortune to maintain an unsullied reputation for superior piety, wisdom, benevolence and consistency throughout a ministry of nearly sixty years." ☞

Psalm Singing Remembered

This encouraging note was posted to an email group discussion forum in February and the author kindly granted permission to *The Blue Banner* to reproduce it here in slightly edited form.

By H. Leverne Rosenberger



ear Mr. [G], You have solicited our views as well as our experiences on what music choirs should sing in churches. I agree with the views already expressed by others on the list, namely, that choirs have no place in New Testament worship services. In addition, let me testify to my experience as to the qualitative difference of a worship service with choirs and orchestral accompaniment, and a service with only the congregation singing only Psalms to the Lord.

You see, as I write I am one hour from my 75th birthday, and have been through a lifetime of growth in this area. I love music and have sung in quartets and choirs in my early life. While still in high school I led a choir that sang in Fisher's Furniture Store show window on Main Street in Souderton, PA singing all-request programs of mostly Gospel music on Saturday afternoons that was broadcast live over radio station WIBG, Philadelphia.

Even at that young age I was troubled with the question you asked. Even a more important question: What songs are appropriate to sing in

the worship service? In the Church of the Brethren in which I was reared, there were many Gospel songs and hymns in the hymnal that we sang that I could not sing heartily. Almost every Sunday I asked myself, Why are we singing this song? Just because someone says that was his or her experience of God, and then the song leader tells us to join in singing that experience as if it is our own experience, appeared to me to be artificial and not really true worship. In those years, I was in choirs that sang portions of the Psalms, usually anthems that repeated a verse or two of the Psalm over and over again in an artistic rendition that creatively made a great statement, usually ending in a huge climax that merited applause from the audience. BUT, I did not know then that the Psalms (a) were composed to be sung in their entirety, and (b) that some churches in past history sang only the Psalms in the worship of God.

Even in Westminster Theological Seminary I did not learn the value of singing only the Psalms in the worship of God. Rather, I was taught that the great hymns of the church have succeeded the

Psalms in Christian worship. I must admit that after becoming familiar with many hymnals, I came to the conclusion that Trinity Hymnal (published by Great Commission Publications of the OPC/PCA) was the finest hymnal I knew. Its great hymns glorified God and often were thrilling to sing. I knew ALL its hymns and Gospel songs, and found only a few verses that I could not conscientiously sing.

But then I discovered the BOOK OF PSALMS FOR SINGING. I discovered that we really could sing all 150 of the Psalms. I introduced this Psalter to a new congregation which I was pastoring, and we began to sing the Psalms part-time and hymns from Trinity Hymnal part-time. I immediately noticed a qualitative difference between the hymns written by various composers and the Psalms.

Here are a few of the differences I noted: First of all, I discovered many verses in the Psalms that I knew that no human composer would dare to write for public singing. And I had to question all over again, "Why am I singing this verse?" I could not pass it off as someone else's experience that I was asked by some song leader to sing as if it were my own. This was the inspired Word of God, and was composed specifically for Israel, the people of God, to sing to God. I began to realize that the one who composed all these verses was the one who was directing me to sing them with the understanding that they are not merely about my experiences but are about the experiences of the Blessed Man of Psalm One, who is Christ. And yet, they are not merely about Christ's experiences apart from his church. They are composed for his church to sing WITH Christ, and much later I discovered that it is through this singing of the Psalms that Christ actually sanctifies, teaches, exhorts, comforts, and leads his church in our daily lives.

Secondly, I discovered the power of the Psalms, in their ability to do in my personal life what no hymn ever had done to me. Nearly every Psalm enlists the singer in a spiritual warfare, declaring the singer's loyalty to God and His Christ and his kingdom, and declaring utter hatred of his enemies. Because of this strange power, I began to sing the Psalms at home every day. I sang right

through the Psalter, sitting at the piano learning every tune. But often I had to stop in the middle of a verse and ask the question, Who are the enemies about which I am singing here? I had to stop to relate to my own life the enemies named in the Psalm. Psalm-singing became hard work, but really profitable work. Singing a Psalm became God's way of teaching me of my sins (many of those enemies were inside of me and I could not glibly call down God's curses on an enemy inside of me) and bringing me to confession and repentance.

I will not mention other differences because it would make this email too long.

Gradually I no longer could have the congregation sing many hymns from Trinity Hymnal. Qualitatively, they could not stand up against a Psalm. And I had to choose between them. There was a time when I could sing a few great hymns from Trinity Hymnal in worship, and mostly Psalms. But the day finally arrived when I realized that NO hymn in Trinity Hymnal could stand up against one of the Psalms, which were inspired by the Spirit of God for worship. I had to make a serious study of the regulative principle of worship as I never had done in seminary, where I was taught the equal value of Psalms and "New Testament hymns". And I became persuaded in my conscience that I could not as a pastor ask the congregation to sing human compositions in the worship of God, since God himself had provided an inspired hymnal infinitely greater and more effective and more pleasing to Him than any alternative composition.

May I add simply what a tremendous blessing worship has become since that time, worship that cannot be compared to the old days when pipe organs played by virtuosos would occasionally drown out the congregation in grand sanctuaries with finely robed choirs reaching perorations of sound that shivered one's frame! Now, bereft of all creaturely "aids to worship", the worship services that I either lead or in which I joyously participate, are all centered in the Word of God, either read, preached, or sung. And I truly believe that the greatest experience this side of Glory is the singing of congregations led by

Christ Himself (see Hebrews 2:12) in the midst, singing his own compositions designed for his church on earth to sing, in its infancy or in its maturity. The richest study of my life has become the Psalms. There is a depth of Christ-centered experience in them that simply has to be explained in order to be grasped. Singing the Psalms IS Christ's WAY of ruling his church. As we learn to sing each Psalm we learn to walk with Christ through all the vicissitudes of life.

Every Sabbath Day is a high and holy experience as a congregation gathers to be led by Christ in singing to God the words selected for our instruction, reproof, correction and direction.

Pastors who really know the Psalter have tools to lead congregations in worship that pastors who stick to Trinity Hymnal simply do not have. The Psalms are Christ's own tools in ruling His church. No man can begin to equal their power and effectiveness in accomplishing the will of God via the singing of imitations.


Thank you for reading this old happy man's "experiences."

H. Leverne Rosenberger, retired missionary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, worshipping in Cambridge, MA RPC, across the Charles River from Boston. ✿

Hints for Psalm Singing Using The Comprehensive Psalter

By Tim Baker

INTRODUCTION

ne of the more encouraging developments in Reformed worship has been the restoration of the Psalter to its proper place in worship in an increasing number of churches across the country. God's songs are meant to be sung, and after years of neglect, some churches are starting to sing them again. There is power in these songs, because they are God's Word.

After experiencing the joy that comes from singing God's Word in corporate worship, some Christians are also beginning to desire to sing God's Word as part of their daily worship. But unless they are familiar with the Psalter, many Psalms will be neglected, because they are unfamiliar with the tunes.

Now there is an answer to these problems with the publication of *The Comprehensive Psalter*. In addition to the Psalter itself, Blue Banner

Publications makes available a schedule which allows the entire Psalter to be sung through in one year. This may be downloaded from their web site. They have also made MIDI files of all the tunes used in the Psalter available at their web site. With these, you may play them on your computer to accompany your singing.

Having printed music and words before you with the tunes playing in the background helps greatly, but there still may be some awkwardness for those of us who are not used to the Psalter. In this article, I would like to give a few hints, which should help you in getting started.

SINGING THE PSALMS

Like any song book, *The Comprehensive Psalter* contains both words and musical notation. Generally, one line of words will match up with one line of music. Some exceptions do exist, and examples will be noted below.

In going through the Psalms I have noticed that it's generally better to ignore commas. They may or may not come at the point in the music where you think they should. In other words, to complete a musical phrase, you may go well beyond a comma in the text. Also you occasionally may find that a word is accented differently when singing it compared to speaking it.

One of the major differences you will find in singing the metrical Psalms is that for words that end in "ed," you usually pronounce the "ed" as a separate syllable. When speaking, we don't always do that. We often tie the "ed" to the last syllable in the word. However, there are plenty of exceptions where we do normally pronounce the "ed" as a separate syllable.

As a rule of thumb though, you will almost always pronounce the "ed" as a separate syllable when using this Psalter. If the text calls for combining the "ed" with the previous syllable, it will use an apostrophe.

For example, if we speak of God sustaining us in the past tense, we usually pronounce it as two syllables. God sus-tained us. But usually in the Psalter, this would be pronounced sus-tain-ed. This is seen in Psalm 3, verse 5:

I laid me down and slept; I wak'd; for God
sus-tain-ed me.

Notice also the use of an apostrophe in wak'd, which is pronounced in one syllable instead of saying wak-ed. The apostrophe is also used to run syllables together that we would normally speak as separate syllables. Sometimes you'll see heav'n instead of hea-ven.

Psalm 25:1-7 gives an example of the same word used both ways. In verse three, you'll see "ashamed" pronounced as a-sham-ed. In the previous verse, you'll see it the way we normally pronounce it, a-shamed.

Another situation is found with words that end in "tion." Sometimes each syllable has a corresponding note to sing with it. But occasionally there are more notes to sing in a phrase than there are syllables to pronounce.

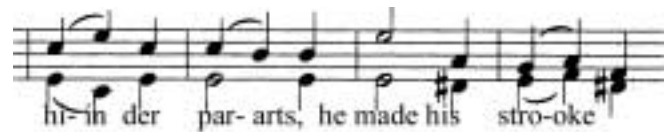
Often in these cases, you will sing two notes for the syllable preceding the "tion."

An example is found in Psalm 3, verse 8. The first line would be sung:

Sal-va-a-tion doth ap-per-tain un-to the Lord
a-lone.

It also helps to watch the musical score for notation which indicates that two notes are to be tied together and sung without breathing. This is indicated by a curved line above or below the two notes. These marks are not used in every Psalm, but where they do occur, they can help to determine how the words will match with the notes.

An example of this is found in Psalm 78:66-72. In the melody (top notes) you will see these marks in the 3rd, 4th, and 6th full measure. In the example below, I've underlined the syllables which correspond to the two notes that are tied together. Using these marks as a guide, the first line would be sung:



Up-on his en'-mies hi-in-der pa-arts he made
his stro-oke to fall.

The above suggestions are not to make Psalm singing sound hard. It really isn't. You'll find after singing for a while, that most of this will become intuitive.

SPECIAL CASES

Occasionally, you will come across a Psalm that doesn't seem to follow the general rule of one line of words matching up with one line of music. One example is found in Psalm 49:12-20. The first thing to notice is in the top staff, on the end to the right. You will notice that the 2nd measure from the end is divided by two parallel lines. The two lines indicate that you are now to be singing the second line of text. That will become apparent when singing the Psalm.

The other thing you will notice about this Psalm is that you run out of words before the music

stops. You will also notice a sign above the two staves on the bottom line of the score, just before the end. What this means is that the last part of the phrase is to be repeated. Thus, the first two verses would be sung as:

But yet in honour shall not man abide continually;

But passing hence, may be compar'd unto the beasts that die, unto the beasts that die.

Thus brutish folly plainly is their wisdom and their way;

Yet their posterity approve what they do fondly say, what they do fondly say.

Psalm 68:18-26 provides a similar example. In this case there are no parallel lines, and thus one line of music per line of text. But the last phrase of the second line is repeated:

Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high;

And in triumph victorious led captive captivity, led captive captivity:

Thou hast received gifts for men, for such as did rebel;

Yea, ev'n for them, that God the Lord in midst of them might dwell, in midst of them might dwell.

FOR PRACTICE

If you own a computer with a sound card and speakers, you can download MIDI files of these Psalm tunes at the Blue Banner web site. Point your web browser to the following page:

<http://www.fpcr.org/psalms2001.htm>

Download the file: Comprehensive Tunes.zip. This downloads more than 300 Psalm tunes in MIDI format. These tunes must be unzipped using a program such as PKunzip. Once unzipped, you will be able to use them with any program capable of playing MIDI files. The files are named by the Psalm tune name that appears in the Psalter. The file may have an abbreviated name, but it will be close enough that you can figure out what the tune name is. In some instances there are several versions of a tune, so you may have to figure out which one is the version used in the Psalter. There are also many

other tunes included that are not used in this Psalter. You will be able to play these tunes on your computer to practice your Psalm singing, if desired. This is especially good if you want to learn a part to sing other than the melody.

You can take this learning process a bit further if you own sequencing software. You can import the MIDI file into your sequencer, and then mute all parts except the one that you want to learn. Once you have your part down, add the other parts back in for four part harmony. For the ultimate "test" on how well you have learned your part, mute out the part that you just learned and play the other parts. This approximates a capella singing where you are on your own to come up with your part, since no instrument is playing your part. This is an excellent way to learn and train your musical ear.

CLOSING COMMENTS

If you have not bought a copy of *The Comprehensive Psalter*, it may be purchased from Blue Banner Books. See their web site: <http://www.fpcr.org/catalog/books-online.htm>

I am greatly appreciative of the entire staff of Blue Banner Books and the First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas for publishing this Psalter, providing the MIDI files, the schedule of daily Psalm singings, and for several suggestions, which have been incorporated above.

Soli Deo Gloria

[Tim Baker is a Horticulture Specialist with the University of Missouri Extension system. He is a member of First Presbyterian Church (PCA), Osceola, Arkansas, where he serves as a Ruling Elder.]

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The lack of a well-built, affordable, comprehensive Psalter, true to the Hebrew Text, has long been the bane of the Reformed community. There are other Psalters that can most charitably be described as “paraphrastic,” but often the Psalms are unrecognizable. Others have words only, with no music available. Some have words and music, but are not sturdy enough to stand up to frequent use, and therefore are not appropriate as pew Psalters. Some have only a few Psalms or a few tunes and miss out on the richness of the entire Psalter. A good Psalter, when available, is often priced too high to be affordable for many congregations and individuals. Blue Banner Books has tried to address these problems as we developed our *Comprehensive Psalter*.

The Comprehensive Psalter is both old and new. It is old because the versification actually dates from 1650. It is new because the layout of the Psalm settings has never before been as *useful* as it is in this Psalter. This layout is designed to make the Psalter more helpful to those who desire to sing the Psalms every day of their lives.

There are 312 standard Psalm settings. This gives the user of *The Comprehensive Psalter* six Psalm settings (or “Psalter selections”) — one for each weekday plus Saturday — for the 52 weeks in one year. Using this plan, one can sing entirely through the Psalter once every year. At First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, we sing those same six Psalm selections in our public worship the following Sunday. Utilizing this plan, one can sing entirely through the Psalter twice every year: once during the week in family or personal worship, and then again on Sundays in public worship.

The overwhelming majority of Psalm selections in *The Comprehensive Psalter* are in common meter. One could actually sing the entirety of the Book of Psalms knowing only a few common tunes. However, nearly 200 tunes were selected for the Psalm settings in *The Comprehensive Psalter*. Most are easily learned and sung. There are additional tunes, along with alternative versifications of some of the Psalms, in the back of the Psalter, giving the Psalm-singer numerous options to find an easier, or more familiar, tune.

The Psalter Committee of FPCR and Blue Banner Books complete 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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The First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett

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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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