

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP

**Household Devotions
Each Morning and Evening
As a Chief Means of
Church Revival**

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© DECEMBER 2000

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HOUSEHOLD DEVOTIONS EACH MORNING AND EVENING AS A CHIEF MEANS OF CHURCH REVIVAL

1987 Doctoral Dissertation
(as subsequently expanded)

originally submitted
at
Whitefield Theological Seminary
Lakeland, Florida, U.S.A.
in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.)

by

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Seventh Edition: December 2000

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q. & A. 156f states: 'Although all are not to be permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation, yet all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves and with their families. To which end the Holy Scriptures are to be translated out of the original into vulgar [*viz.* common] languages.'

Here, Rev. Dr. T. Ridgeley in his *Commentary on the Larger Catechism* (II:448f) explains: "The Holy Scriptures are to be read with an high and reverent esteem of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the very Word of God, and that He only can enable us to understand them – with desire to know, believe and obey the will of God revealed in them; with diligence and attention to the matter and scope of them; with meditation, application, self-denial and prayer....

"It is to be read publicly in the congregation by those who are appointed for that purpose.... The reading of it publicly, as part of the worship performed in the church, is not only a testimony of the high esteem which we have for it – but will be of great use to those who through a sinful neglect to read it in families...will not allow themselves time to do so....

"The Word of God is to be read in our families. This duty is absolutely necessary for the propagating of religion in them. It is indeed shamefully neglected.... The neglect of it is one great reason of the ignorance and decay of piety in the rising generation, and is also contrary to God's command (Deuteronomy 6:6f) as well as the example of those who are highly commended for this practice. Thus, Abraham commended his children and his household after him that they should 'keep the way of the Lord' (Genesis 18:19). Psalm 78:3-5....

"The wisest and best of men have expressed the highest esteem and value for it. The Psalmist [119:97] mentions the love he had to it, as a person who was in a rapture: 'O how love I Thy Law! It is my meditation all the day'.... To read the Scriptures and not understand them, will be of no advantage to us.... It is supposed that we are endeavouring to have our minds rightly informed and furnished with the knowledge of divine truths.... If we do not desire to know or understand the meaning of Scripture, it will remain no better than a sealed book to us.... We ought to desire not only to believe but to yield a constant and cheerful obedience to everything which God therein requires of us....

"Our thoughts should be wholly and intensely taken up with the subject of it.... The Word of God is to be read with fervent prayer. 'If any man lack wisdom,' says the Apostle, 'let him ask of God Who giveth to all men liberally' [James 1:5].... There are many things in His Word which are hard to be understood.... We ought to say, whenever we take the Scriptures into our hands, as the Psalmist [119:18] does – 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law!'"

Rev. Prof. J.G. Vos commented in his *Blue Banner Faith and Life* (Oct. 17th 1948 pp. 151f): "We believe that the Word of God is to be read in the family circle. As the family is the basic unit of human society, so too the family is the basic unit in God's Covenant of Grace. It is through the Christian family that the body of God's covenant people is perpetuated from generation to generation. Parents together with their children are participants in this Covenant.... Therefore the Christian family is a covenant institution, and has covenant obligations as well as covenant promises and covenant blessings, among which is the obligation to maintain family worship.

"Of course, family worship could be carried on without the actual reading of the written Bible – as was no doubt often necessary before the invention of the art of printing. But since in the providence of God the Word is available to all in printed form, it is obvious that family worship is greatly facilitated and also rendered more effective by the reading of the printed Bible."

The question is sometimes asked: 'Is the practice of family worship commanded in the Bible and if so where?' In the *Blue Banner Faith and Life* I:7 July-Sept. 1946 pp. 138f Vos answered: "The practice of family worship is Scriptural.... The family is a divine institution (Genesis 2:23-24) and as such is a moral person with a responsibility to God. The Christian family is a basic unit in the administration of the Covenant of Grace (Genesis 17:7; [18:17-19]; Acts 2:39; Ephesians 5:21 to 6:4; *etc.*). Therefore Christian families should practice family worship to acknowledge their responsibility, as families, to God, and to express their thanks to God as families, for the benefits of the Covenant of Grace and to seek His help as families in living up to their high calling and obligations under the Covenant of Grace."

By 1543 Scotland had already started deromanizing. Her wicked law against reading the Bible, was set aside. Just over a decade later when John Knox went from Scotland to Calvin in Geneva, he left behind his *Most Wholesome Counsel* about family worship: to be read by the leaders of those meetings.

In that *Counsel*, Knox reminded them how Moses had told the Lord's people to teach their children God's Word at home. Genesis 18:17-19; Exodus 12:26-37; Leviticus 24:2-4; Numbers 28:3-8; and Deuteronomy 6:1-25. Urged Knox: Let no day slip over without reading it...in every home...once a day at least."

G.M. Alexander's *Sunrise in Scotland: The Coming Reformation*, 1948, p. 52f.

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FOREWORD TO "DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP"

This book on daily family worship, by Rev. Professor Doctor Nigel Lee, is quite a monumental work, covering the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation on the theme of daily family worship. It goes on to trace the impact on Church History of such family worship; its strategic place in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechism, and in other great documents of the Reformation period.

Significantly, the document closes on a personal note, testifying to the impact of daily family worship, night and morning, on the Lee family. It is woven into the very fabric of their family life, and is a safeguard against the family-splitting tendencies of much of our modern life.

We thank God for this testimony. May I add my word of grateful thanks for my own parents' fidelity in bringing up their family in the same way.

I highly recommend this book of Dr. Lee's. May it constitute a challenge and an encouragement to our total Church! I believe it could be a significant help also to the spread and practice of evangelism which, for over 30 years, has been the love of my life.

- Harold J. Whitney (Th.M., Th.D., D.D., D.Litt.)
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PREFACE

Consistently trinitarian worship requires daily household devotions! God is Triune, and the various Persons in the Godhead have praised One Another from all eternity.

Also during the formation week of our Earth after its exnihilation, God the Father and the Son praised One Another in the fellowship of Their Holy Spirit – **morning** and **evening**, and **day** by **day**. In so doing, They were setting an example for Their image – the human family – later to follow.

Jesus Christ commanded that Christian families be baptized into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19 *cf.* Acts 2:38f. This Father-Son-Spirit is the Triune God *Jehovah Elohim*, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.

"In the beginning, *Elohim* created the Heavens and the Earth.... The Spirit of God moved upon the surface of the waters, and *Elohim* said: 'Let there be light!' ... And it was evening and morning, the first day.... 'Let there be a firmament!' ... And it was evening and morning, the second day.... 'Let the dry land appear!' ... And it was evening and morning, the third day....

"Then *Elohim* said, 'Let Us make men in Our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion!' ... So *Elohim* created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him. He created them male and female. Then *Elohim* blessed them, and *Elohim* said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the Earth!'" Genesis 1:1-28.

Also in Proverbs 8:22-35, we have a poetic account of these same events – together with the additional statement that men are therefore themselves to watch and pray daily before the Lord. There, the Second Person of the Trinity – Wisdom, the Word of God – declared:

"*Jehovah* possessed Me...from everlasting; from the beginning; before the Earth ever was.... Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth.... When He prepared the Heavens, I was there.... When He appointed the foundations of the Earth, then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him.... I was **daily** His delight, rejoicing always before Him – rejoicing in the habitable part of His Earth; and My delights were with the sons of men....

"Now, therefore, listen to Me, O you children! For blessed are they who keep My ways. Heed instruction and be wise, and do not refuse it! Blessed is the man

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that listens to Me, watching **daily** at My gates, waiting at My doorposts. For whosoever finds Me, finds life – and shall obtain favour from the Lord."

On the latter passage, Matthew Henry rightly remarked in his famous *Commentary on the Holy Bible*: "All divine revelation, is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him.... He was begotten of the Father...as His Own Son.... He was brought forth as the Only-begotten of the Father...before all Worlds.... The Word was eternal, and had a being before the World, before the beginning of time; and therefore it must follow that it was from eternity....

"He was **daily** His Father's Delight.... This may be understood either...of the infinite delight which the Persons of the blessed Trinity have in Each Other, wherein consists much of the happiness of the divine nature – or...of the pleasure which the Father took in the operations of the Son when He made the World. God saw everything that the Son made, and behold, it was very good.

"It pleased Him, and therefore His Son was **daily** – day by day – during the six days of the creation, upon that account, His Delight.... The Son also did Himself rejoice before Him.... The Father delighted in the Son.....

"We must be diligent hearers of the Word! For how can we believe in Him of Whom we have not heard? 'Hearken unto Me, O ye children!' Read the Word written; sit under the Word preached; bless God for both; and hear Him, in both, speaking to you! Let children in age hearken, for it is their learning age.... What they hearken to then, it is likely they will be so seasoned by – as to be governed by **all their days**....

"We must hear Wisdom – so as to 'watch **daily** at her gates' – as beggars to receive an alms; as clients and patients to receive advice.... Every day, is dole-day.... For every day, is lecture-day. While we have God's works before our eyes and His Word in our hand – we may be **every day** hearing Wisdom, and learning instruction....

"We must raise our expectations of these instructions, and hearken to them with care and patience and perseverance – must watch and wait, as Christ's hearers that hanged on Him to hear Him...'came **early** in the **morning** to hear Him." Luke 19:48 & 21:38.

Thus, the Father and the Son fellowshiped in Their Spirit **day by day**. May all families, created in the image of that Triune God, do the same – heeding His Word each **morning**, and 'watching **daily**' in praise and prayer!

Also busy theologians need to do this. Here, from Reid's *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines*, we note (alphabetically) the practices anent daily family

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worship of Revs. Case, Cawdrey, Clark, Gataker, Gillespie, Goodwin, Gouge, Harris, Herle, Hill, Lightfoot, Palmer, Rutherford, Staunton, Walker, Wallis, Whitaker, Wilkinson Sr., Wilkinson Jr., and Wilson.

Even in the midst of the severe strain of constantly struggling against their political and theological adversaries, the above divines are known to have kept on practising daily family worship. Doubtless most if not all of the rest of the the Westminster Assembly's Commissioners did so too. Indeed, many of them had themselves been raised that way – years earlier, from childhood.

Thus, Kent's Rev. Thomas Case (M.A.) was the son of Rev. George Case. George raised Thomas in accordance with Proverbs 22:6 – "Catechize a lad in the way he should go; then, when his beard begins to grow, he will not depart from it." Consequently, from his childhood to his old age, Thomas Case himself gave many proofs of an eminently pious disposition.

In addition to attending daily family worship with his parents, it is known that Thomas Case also prayed and praised God by himself – every morning and evening – at least from age six onward. For even when a toddler, he knew that God promises His lovingkindness in the morning and His great faithfulness every night. Psalm 92:1-2 *cf.* Mark 10:14.

When Thomas Case grew up, he married a prudent widow and lived with her for nearly forty-five years without contention. With no children of his own, as head of the new household he raised those of his widowed wife.

Every morning and every evening, Case read the Holy Scriptures to his whole household (including his wife's children and their many resident servants) – asking them what they had learned before proceeding to family prayer. Most of those servants later thanked God that they had come to work in the home of Rev. Case.

Essex's Rev. Daniel Cawdrey (M.A.) was the youngest of the many sons of the Nonconformist Rev. Robert Cawdrey. Robert himself wrote the tract *A Godly Form of Household Government*, and raised all of his numerous children in a godly home. It is therefore not surprising that son Daniel followed in his father's footsteps.

Indeed, within a decade of the Westminster Assembly (to which Daniel was a Commissioner) he himself wrote the book *Family Reformation Promoted* – a practical manual on household religion – in 1656. There, he argued that a Christian "chief householder" functions "in Christ's stead" to his own household and "family" – filling the offices of prophet and priest and king also while instructing and praying for and with his own family.

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Yorkshire's Rev. Peter Clark (M.A.) was born of and raised by pious parents. He regarded it as a greater honour to have descended from godly forebears than to have derived his ancestry from the greatest princes.

Later, Clark raised four children while himself teaching a private school. His scholars boarded in his home, participated in his family worship, and were afterward themselves great blessings to their land. Peter also made good provision for his servants and their families.

London's Rev. Thomas Gataker (B.D.) was descended from a very ancient family in Shropshire. When an adult, he was appointed as private tutor to the eldest son of Baronet William Ayloff. Soon, also the latter himself was assisted by Thomas in the study of Hebrew.

While residing with the Ayloffs, Gataker: read to them a portion of the Scriptures every morning; gave to them the sense of the original languages; and made many practical applications of the Word of God. Thus expounding all the apostolic epistles, the prophecy of Isaiah, and a large part of the book of Job – Gataker both deepened his own understanding of the Word of God and also made the Ayloffs wise unto salvation. Second Timothy 3:14-17.

Gataker continued this practice of daily worship in the home, all the days of his life. Even on his deathbed, he sought the face of the Lord. The day before he died, he called his son Draper – and his sister and his daughter – and charged each of them individually.

Thus Gataker then enjoined Draper: "You have a great charge. Look to it! Instruct your wife and family in the fear of God, and discharge your ministry conscientiously!" He also urged him to engage a godly Minister in his house to teach his children and to instruct his own family – and then exhorted all of his next-of-kin to live in concord with one another.

Fifeshire's Rev. George Gillespie – the famous Scottish author of *Aaron's Rod Blossoming* and *The English Popish Ceremonies obtruded upon the Church of Scotland* – was the son of the "thundering preacher" Rev. John Gillespie of Kirkaldy. After receiving a godly and a very comprehensive education, he attended the University of St. Andrews.

So dedicated was Gillespie to matters devotional – that he was for some time appointed chaplain to the family of Lord Kenmure. Indeed, afterwards he was further appointed chaplain to the family of the Earl of Cassilis – who was himself, just like Gillespie, later delegated to the Westminster Assembly.

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When Gillespie lay dying prematurely at but thirty-five years of age in 1648, his wife and children were at his bedside. There, he blessed them. They erected his tombstone, which bore *inter alia* the inscription: "He was an ornament of his country – a son worthy of such a father."

So highly did his country estimate his services, also at Britain's Westminster Assembly, that Parliament itself ordered one thousand pounds sterling to be given to his widow and children. His grandson, also a Rev. George Gillespie, later became the Minister at Strathmiglo.

Norfolk's Rev. Dr. Thomas Goodwin (D.D.) was raised by his godly parents with great care "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4. From childhood they intended him for the Ministry of the Word – in spite of his being a premature baby not expected to survive.

He himself later wrote: "By the course of nature in my first birth, I was not like[ly] to live – being born before my time, and therefore of a weak constitution. Yet God so kept and strengthened me, that He preserved me – as David says [Psalm 22:9], *when I hung upon my mother's breasts* – as one in whom He meant to manifest His grace.... He did often stir up in me in my childish years, the sparks of conscience.... I began to have slighter workings of the Spirit of God from the time I was six years old."

When an adult, Goodwin married the godly Elizabeth Prescott, who gave him a daughter. After his wife's death, he remarried the godly widow Mrs. Mary Hammond, who bore him three children. John Cotton invited him to go to New England, but Goodwin stayed on in old England. There, he soon became a great favourite with Oliver Cromwell. A strong supralapsarian, Goodwin authored many works – including his treatise *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness*.

Middlesex's Rev. Dr. William Gouge (D.D.) was raised by a worshipful father and a virtuous mother. A university student for nine years, except when out of town William was never absent from morning prayers in the chapel at 5:30 a.m. When marrying, he committed the whole care of the secular affairs of his family to the management of his wife – while he himself continued to complete his studies for the Ministry of the Word.

When a Minister, Gouge invited neighbours to his home, where he very simply repeated his sermons to them. His family resembled a church in his home – when at daily family prayers he read both the Holy Scriptures and the Catechism to his household, both morning and evening. Not surprisingly, among his many publications, in 1622 he produced a work titled *Eight Treatises on Domestic Duties*.

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Gloucestershire's Rev. Dr. Robert Harris (D.D.) was raised by godly parents. When he grew up and married a godly woman, he ruled his own house well. First Timothy 3:4. As soon as his children could speak, he taught them to repeat some historical passages of the Holy Scriptures. Even his last will and testament contains much excellent advice to his wife and to his numerous children.

Cornwall's Charles Herle (M.A.) had good ancestors and was born of honourable parents. When an adult, upon the death of Rev. Dr. Twisse, he was chosen Prolocutor (or Moderator) of the Westminster Assembly in 1646. Herle had many choice sayings. One of them was: "Religious families are the surest nurseries of religion."

Worcestershire's Rev. Dr. Thomas Hill (D.D.) was born of godly parents, who – following the custom of their forefathers – most solemnly dedicated him to God in his childhood. He was one of the chief pillars of Presbyterianism. Among his many works, were: *An Apology in Defence of the Geneva Notes on the Bible* (highly approved by the archpuritan Archbishop James Ussher); his *Christian Sabbath Maintained*; and his *Annotations on the Pentateuch*.

Staffordshire's famous Rev. Dr. John Lightfoot (D.D.) was raised as the second of five sons by his godly parents Rev. & Mrs. Thomas Lightfoot. From his earliest years, John was trained by his dedicated father and mother – as well as by eminent and pious teachers.

Kent's Rev. Herbert Palmer (B.D.) was raised from infancy by his godly father Sir Thomas Palmer and his wife. His parents carefully trained him "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Being early impressed with religious thoughts, he asked his mother for information about God when but four or five years old. Sanctified from his mother's womb, from babyhood he was well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures "which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." Jeremiah 1:5; Ephesians 6:4 & Second Timothy 3:15.

When himself an adult, after his ordination to the Ministry of the Word he carefully catechized the people of his charge both publicly and privately. He himself was constant in family worship, twice every day. For he had firmly resolved that he and his house would serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15.

While Pastor at Ashwell in Hartfordshire, the sons of several nobles and gentlemen wanted to spend some time in his home, so that they might profit from his family instructions. So he maintained in his home an assistant, to tutor these young men – requiring of them the same account in catechizing as of his own servants.

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A chapter of the Holy Bible was daily read by one of them, in course, after dinner and supper. He whose turn it was to read, was required also to repeat from memory the substance of what he had read. Thus, much knowledge was obtained. Palmer himself would then explain difficult passages – and in addition require his servants to listen to the reading of some part of Scripture after every meal.

Kirkcudbright's Rev. Professor Dr. Samuel Rutherford was born of and raised by very honest and respectable parents. Samuel was one of several children. His parents dedicated him to the service of his Lord and Saviour – especially after Samuel, when yet a little boy, was rescued from drowning in a well.

After such a childhood, it is not surprising that Rutherford became a great champion of family worship. He constantly encouraged people to practise this – even though, generally speaking, such meetings at that time already prevailed in the land.

What makes Rutherford's encouragement of family worship in others all the more remarkable, is that early in his ministry he himself lost first his two children and then (in 1630) his dear wife Eupham Hamilton Rutherford. This affected him so deeply, that he too was then laid aside from his earthly public labours – for more than three months. Finally recovering, he then became especially dear to all his parishioners within his charge. Among them, he vigorously promoted family worship.

Thus, to John Gordon, he wrote in 1637: "I desire your children to seek the Lord.... Let them be filled with the Spirit; acquit themselves with daily praying; and with...the good Word of God."

To the Elder Cardoness, he wrote in the same year: "Desire your children, in the morning of their life, to begin and seek the Lord, and to remember their Creator in the days of their youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1), to cleanse their way by taking heed thereto according to God's Word (Psalm 119:9)... Instruct them in this!"

At the same time, he wrote to his parishioners in Anwoth: "Remember, I forewarned you.... Study to know God and His will, and keep in mind the doctrine of the *Catechism*, which I taught you carefully – and speak of it in your houses, and in the fields, carefully – and speak of it in your houses, and in the fields, when ye lie down at night, and when ye rise in the morning!" Cf. Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

The next year, Rutherford remarried. Jean M'Math Rutherford bore him seven children. She became widely known as a godly woman of prayer.

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The prelatical party even within the Church of Scotland, however, then seems to have tried to get family worship abolished! Hence, an attempt was made by the episcopalizing faction of Rev. Henry Guthrie at the 1640 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to restrain religious meetings of private societies such as even families. Predictably, in the ensuing debate, Rutherford supported Rev. Professor Dr. Alexander Henderson.

Rev. Henry Guthrie and his prelatical supporters apparently wished to dismiss all such private meetings. Professor Henderson, however, was able to present the General Assembly with a paper respecting the desirable order to be observed at such meetings.

Rutherford then declared that the Scottish Assembly may not dismiss what Scripture warrants. He next proceeded to prove the propriety of such private meetings – *inter alia* by appealing to Malachi 3:16 and James 5:16. Accordingly, the Assembly then passed an act respecting the ordering of family worship – and Rutherford, in a treatise, to a very high degree defended the lawfulness of such religious meetings.

Bedfordshire's Rev. Dr. Edmund Staunton (D.D.), one of the several sons of Sir Francis Staunton, was – like all of his brothers – carefully trained in true wisdom. Ecclesiastes 7:11. After growing up and becoming ordained, he married and in due course became the father of a daughter.

A beloved Preacher who catechized his people from house to house, after the death of his first wife he remarried and then fathered many sons and daughters. All of them he instructed daily, at family worship, in their duties of religion.

Staunton often passed whole days in prayer and humiliation, both by himself alone and in conjunction with his family. Indeed, the Holy Scriptures were his daily delight.

Ten of his children were buried in one grave. Thus, even locally, most of his family were still together in religious covenant – even after their deaths! The tombstone inscription says it all:

"Here lie the bodies of Francis, Richard, Mary,
Matthew, Mary, Richard, Edmund, Edmund, Sarah, Richard:
children whom the Lord graciously gave to Edmund Staunton D.D.,
Late Minister of Kingston-upon-Thames....

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"Ten children in one grave – a dreadful sight;
seven sons, and daughters three, Job's number right....
Our hope's in Christ the second Adam; He
Who saves the elect from sin and misery....
'Tis our creed,
God is a God to the faithful and their seed!"

Lancashire's Rev. George Walker (B.D.) was descended from religious parents who were highly beneficial to him in his early years and peculiarly attentive to his education. Such pious instructions were of great value to him even very early in life.

Kent's Rev. Dr. John Wallis Jr. (D.D.) had a godly father, Rev. John Wallis Sr. (M.A.), who died when John Jr. was very young. However, the latter was then carefully raised by his godly mother. She was peculiarly carefully in piously and prudently educating all of her children, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4.

Yorkshire's Rev. Jeremiah Whitaker (M.A.) manifested his piety at a very early age. Later, he became equally attentive to family duties and the personal devotions. His ordinary course in his family, was to worship God and to expound some part of the Holy Scriptures twice every day.

Yorkshire's Rev. Henry Wilkinson Sr. (B.D.) married Sarah, the daughter of a zealous Puritan Minister. Henry and Sarah produced six sons and three daughters, and lived together happily for more than fifty years, much of the time in Buckinghamshire. Wilkinson produced several works, also including a *useful Catechism*.

Buckinghamshire's Rev. Dr. Henry Wilkinson Jr. (D.D.), one of the nine children of the above-mentioned Rev. Henry and Sarah Wilkinson, was given a godly upbringing at home. By age thirteen, he was admitted to Magdalen Hall at Oxford, and later became Margaret Professor at the University.

Cumbria's Rev. Thomas Wilson (M.A.) was raised by sober and honest parents well-respected by their neighbours. "From a child, he knew the Holy Scriptures." Second Timothy 3:15.

Wilson normally rose by two or three a.m. on sabbath mornings. At about seven o'clock he came out of his study, and called his whole family together, to whom he read and expounded a portion of the Holy Scriptures (generally from the Old Testament). Thereafter, he required those present to give some account of the exposition. They then sung some part of a psalm, and concluded with prayer.

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At midday, he constantly prayed with his family before dinner. Afterward, he spent some time with them in singing and other religious exercises. In the afternoon, he observed the same method in worship as in the morning (except now from the New Testament).

At the end of the day, Wilson called his family together, when many neighbours attended. They then repeated the sermons and expositions, after which he sung a psalm and concluded with prayer.

Wilson influenced many persons to engage in family worship, who had neglected it formerly. They then performed it morning and evening. As they sung at those times, persons walking in the street might hear the singing of psalms in many families. This was a plentiful source of joy and gratitude to every mind which was seasoned with genuine piety.

Now according to the official *Minutes*, during Session 531 of the Westminster Assembly on November 10th 1645 the House decided to "enter upon debate of the neglect of family duties in reference to the catalogue of scandalous sins." After debate, it was resolved that this "shall be put into the catalogue of scandalous sins – 'Those who *after admonition* do ordinarily (and usually) neglect daily prayer with their families.'"

Then, at Session 645 on May 22nd 1646, after a good debate in the Westminster Assembly, it was "*resolved* upon the Q[uestion] – 'Such as neglect to instruct their families in those necessary principles of religion...is a sufficient cause to debar them from the sacrament.' *Resolved* upon the Q[uestion], 'That this be added to the enumeration and sent up to the Committee.'"

Next, the Westminster Assembly finalized its various enactments. In its *Larger Catechism* 156, after asking: "Is the Word of God to be read by all?" – it answered *inter alia* that "all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves and with their families." As prooftexts for the latter proposition, it later added: "Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Genesis 18:17-19; Psalm 78:5-7."

In its *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, the Westminster Assembly declared that especially on the Lord's Day, there were to "be private preparations of every person and family" and that "what time is vacant, between or after the solemn meetings of the congregation in publick, [is to] be spent in reading, meditation [and] repetition of sermons – especially by calling their families to an account of what they have heard; and catechising of them, holy conferences, prayer for a blessing upon the publick ordinances, [and] singing of psalms" *etc.*

Indeed, the *Directory* concluded: "It is the duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by singing of psalms together in the congregations and also privately

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in the family. In singing of psalms, the voice is to be tunably and gravely ordered.... The chief care must be to sing with understanding.... Every one that can read, is to have a psalm book.... All others, not disabled by age or otherwise, are to be exhorted to learn to read."

Finally, in its *Confession of Faith* (21:6), the Westminster Assembly declared that "God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily" *etc.* As prooftexts for these propositions, it later added: "Malachi 1:11; First Timothy 2:8; John 4:23f; Jeremiah 10:25; Deuteronomy 6:6f; Job 1:5; Second Samuel 6:18-20; First Peter 3:7; Acts 10:2; and Matthew 6:11."

May we today then go, and do likewise! Genesis 18:18f & Acts 10:2f & First Peter 3:7 *cf.* Luke 10:37.

- Rev. Prof. Dr. Francis Nigel Lee,
Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History,
Queensland Presbyterian Theological Seminary,
Emmanuel College, Brisbane, Australia, 1995.

I

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP FROM ADAM TO NOAH

Before the universe was created, there was only the Lord God Jehovah. From all eternity, God the Father always shared His glory with God the Son in the power of God the Holy Spirit. John 17:5 *cf.* Hebrews 9:14.

Even then, uninterruptedly, the three Persons within that Triune God always praised One Another. These activities of **the Triune God as the Perfect Family from all eternity**, represent the prototype of which man's daily family worship is but a faint reflection. Genesis 1:26 to 2:3 *cf.* Matthew 28:18-20.

During our Earth's formation week, God the Father spoke forth His Filial Word in the power of His Holy Spirit. Genesis 1:1-3f. Indeed – no doubt establishing a pattern for the angels and also for mankind as God's own image later to follow – They thus fellowshiped Together, **every morning** and **every evening**. Genesis 1:5-31.

Thus, while shaping our Earth's sky and its clouds and its mountains, creation's Lord and Father rejoiced together with His Filial Wisdom in the fellowship of Their Holy Spirit. This They all did, with delight, and **daily**. Here, the Hebrew states: *yom-yom* (or 'day by day'). Proverbs 8:12-30 – *cf.* Genesis 1:5; 1:8; 1:13; 1:19; 1:23; 1:31; 2:1-3. See too especially our Preface here above.

At some unspecified time in the remote past, God created also the angels – to be His sons or children. During those days of Earth's formation week, and before the Lord made man, His angelic sons or children praised Jehovah every morning. Job 38:4-7. Perhaps this too was intended to set an example for Adam and Eve and their children to follow – after God later created them, as His final masterpiece, to serve and to worship Him forever.

God finally made man and woman, as His very own image. Genesis 1:26. The Divine Family within the Triune God then commissioned mankind to form human families – and also, as such, to worship the Lord. Genesis 1:27f. Giving mankind that Great Commission, God then sabbathed. Genesis 2:1-3.

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Thus God saw everything that He had made –
all very good, when came the sixth day's shade.
Yet better still – when came the sabbath day,
the man and wife awoke, to praise and pray.

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Three blessings every day –
when fam'lies rise and pray;
next, work with all their might;
then hear God's Word each night.

Reflecting on the first page of Genesis, Germany's greatest theologian once made some very important comments. About the prefall family worship of Adam and Eve as they prayerfully praised Jehovah and hearkened to His Word, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther commented:¹

"On the morning of the sabbath day, Adam and Eve were mindful of the will of God, *etc.* Thus Adam and Eve, flowering in innocence and original righteousness, and full of security on account of their trust in the most kind God, walked around...holding fast to the Word...of God and praising God – as befits the sabbath day....

"If Adam had stood in innocency, yet he would have kept the seventh day holy.... On that day he would have taught his children and children's children what was the will of God, and wherein His worship did consist. He would have praised God, given thanks, and offered. On the other days, he would have tilled his ground, [and] looked after his cattle....

"Adam was to gather with his descendants on the Sabbath, at the tree of life." He was "to preach, *i.e.*, to proclaim God and His praises and the glory of creation....and to exhort them to a holy and sinless life and to a faithful tilling and keeping of the garden....

"God also ordained that we should work for six days, and celebrate the seventh.... Therefore, when man would have worked for six days in the week, he would on the seventh have ceased working – both he and the animals – especially so that he could then have had time to hear the Word of God." Note here the triune elements of all worship: praise, prayer, and the Word of God!

* * * * *

Let us now hear from yet another Protestant Reformer about this matter of mankind's domestic devotions before the fall. We shall next listen to the greatest of all French Presbyterians, Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin.

It is true Calvin only implied daily household worship in the garden of Eden. Yet we believe he did so, very clearly. Indeed, he did so – especially *via* his firm

¹ M. Luther: *Commentary on Genesis* (any ed.), *in loco*; and in his *Thesaurus* (1555), Luedenscheid: Johann Berg, 1983, p. 73A.

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insistence on man's pre-fall and post-fall weekly sabbath-keeping every seven days.

Calvin also even more clearly implied regular family worship – in his many allusions to a whole host of divine revelations regularly handed down by parents to their children. These were thus transmitted from father to son, from one generation to the next. They were related by Adam to his children; by them to their descendants; then *via* Noah and his sons down to Abraham and his household; and so on, even unto Moses. The latter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then wrote out the record we now find at the very front of the Holy Bible.

Explained Calvin in his 'Argument' right before the commencement of his *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*: "The intention of Moses, in beginning his Book with the creation of the World, is to render God as it were visible to us in His works.... He does not transmit to memory things before unheard of, but...consigns to writing – facts which the fathers had delivered as from hand to hand, through a long succession of years, to their children.

"Can we conceive that man was so placed on the Earth as to be ignorant of his own origin, and of the origin of those things which he enjoyed? No sane person doubts that Adam was well-instructed respecting them all. Was he indeed afterwards dumb?" See Genesis 5:1-5f!

"Were the holy Patriarchs so ungrateful as to suppress in silence such necessary instruction? Did Noah, [after having been] warned by a divine judgment so memorable, neglect to transmit it to posterity?" See Genesis 9:27f & 10:1f!

"Abraham is expressly honoured with this eulogy – that he was the teacher and the master of his family (Genesis 18:19). And we know that – long before the time of Moses – an acquaintance with the covenant into which God had entered with their fathers, was common to the whole people." See: Hosea 6:7; Genesis 6:18 & 9:1-17f; 15:5-18; 17:7f; 26:4f; 28:13f; 35:1-21; Exodus 3:3-17; 17:14f; Matthew 19:4-8; Mark 10:3-9 & 12:26.

"When he says that the Israelites were sprung from a holy race, which God had chosen for Himself, he [Moses] does not propound it as something new, but only commemorates what all held – what the old men themselves had received from their ancestors and what in short was entirely uncontroverted among them. Therefore, we ought not to doubt that the creation of the World, as here described [in Genesis] was already known through the ancient and perpetual tradition of the Fathers.

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"Yet, since nothing is more easy than that the truth of God should be so corrupted by men that, in a long succession of time, it should as it were degenerate from itself – it pleased the Lord to commit the history to writing, for the purpose of preserving its purity. Moses therefore has established the credibility of that doctrine which is contained in his writings, and which by the carelessness of men might otherwise have been lost."

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Commenting on the nature of the pre-fall 'image' of God, Calvin also stated² that the Apostle Paul in "Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:23...made this 'image' to consist in 'righteousness and true holiness'.... The chief seat of God's image was in his [man's] mind and heart, where it was eminent. Yet there was no part of him in which some [human] scintillations of it did not shine forth....

"Adam with his wife was formed for the production of offspring.... The words of God are to this effect: 'Behold, I have prepared food for you before you were formed. Acknowledge Me, therefore, as your Father Who has so diligently provided for you.... You [Adam] are, in a sense, constituted the father of the earthly family – *paterfamilias in mundo*.'"

Calvin continued:³ "God certainly did not intend that man should be sustained slenderly and sparingly.... For Moses relates how beneficent the Lord had been to them [Adam and Eve], in bestowing on them all things which they could desire – that their ingratitude might have the less excuse....

"Six days were employed in the formation of the world..., that He might engage us in the consideration of His works. He had the same end in view in the appointment of His own rest. For He set apart a day selected out of the remainder for this special use." Thus God's benediction, in Genesis 2:3.

Said Calvin: "That benediction is nothing else than a solemn consecration by which God claims for Himself the meditations and employments of men on the seventh day. This is, indeed, the proper business of the whole life in which men should daily exercise themselves" – including Adam, even before the fall.

"Lest men should prove less sedulously attentive to it than they ought, every seventh day has been selected especially for the purpose of supplying what was wanting in daily meditation. First, therefore, God rested; then He blessed this rest, that in all ages it might be held sacred among men....

² J. Calvin: *Commentary on Genesis*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948, I, at Gen. 1:26-28.

³ *Comm.* on Gen. 1:28f & 2:3.

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"The Sabbath was a figure of this rest.... It was commanded to men from the beginning, that they might employ themselves in the worship of God. It is right that it should continue to the end of the world."⁴ Isaiah 66:23f.

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Calvin also made a very important comment on the Fourth Commandment in the Mosaic Decalogue. That comment has a lot of bearing explicitly on weekly family sabbath-keeping – and implicitly on daily household devotions – even before the fall. Speaking of Christians in his own day, Calvin declared:⁵

"We have an equal necessity for the Sabbath with the ancient people, so that on one day we may be free and thus the better prepared to learn and to testify our faith.... It is very absurd that a man should encourage a profane contempt of God in the family over which he presides.... The hallowing of the Sabbath was prior to the [Mosaic] Law.... [It] seems to have had its origin from a well-known and received custom....

"It is not credible that the observance of the Sabbath was omitted when God revealed the rite of sacrifice to the holy fathers. But what in the depravity of human nature was altogether extinct among heathen nations, and almost obsolete with the race of Abraham – God renewed in His Law." Genesis 2:1-3; 3:21; 4:3f; 4:26; 7:4-11; 8:6-12; 8:20f; 9:1-7; 12:3; 12:7f; 13:4; 18:19; Exodus 5:4f; 16:4f; 20:8-11; *etc.*

Calvin continued:⁶ "Adam was, by God's appointment, an inhabitant of the Earth – in order that he might, in passing through his earthly life, meditate on heavenly glory.... He was commanded to cultivate the fields" and to eat of the tree of life in Eden during his period of probation here on Earth.

"The Holy Spirit...relates, by Moses, the greatness of Adam's happiness.... That benediction of God...had in this place poured itself forth.... Man, as often as he tasted the fruit of that tree, should remember whence he received his life, in order that he might acknowledge that he lives not by his own power but by the kindness of God alone."

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⁴ *Comm.* on Gen. 2:3.

⁵ *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948, III, on Ex. 20:8f.

⁶ *Comm.* on Gen. 2:8f.

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The Genevan genius thus indicated that Adam's own pre-fall 'meditation' on the words and works of God was both natural and necessary. He next went on to describe⁷ the creation of Eve as Adam's co-meditating pre-fall helpmate.

Indeed, their equally necessary marital meditations together – would, with similar naturalness, form the basis of the later daily family worship within their home. First Peter 3:7; Colossians 3:18-21; Genesis 1:26-28.

Explained Calvin: "God from the beginning imposed a Law upon man for the purpose of maintaining the right due to Himself.... We must, I say, remember from what kind of life man fell.... A wife was personally necessary for Adam," observes the great French-Swiss Reformer, precisely so "that she might be the inseparable associate of his life....

"Something was taken from Adam in order that he might [subsequently] embrace with greater benevolence a part of himself.... A far richer reward was granted him since he obtained a faithful associate of life....

"In the person of the woman, the human race was...like a building just begun.... Adam did not take a wife to himself at his own will.... The sanctity of marriage hence more clearly appears because we recognize God as its Author."

Calvin concluded:⁸ "The children of God may embrace a conjugal life with a good and tranquil conscience, and husbands and wives may live together in chastity and honour.... Unless we think and speak honourably of marriage – reproach is attached to its Author and Patron....

"Adam derived this knowledge" – from God Himself. While Eve, Adam's future prayer-partner and helpmate, was being created – Adam himself "was at that time buried in deep sleep.... But we ought not to doubt that God would make the whole course of the affair manifest to him...by His Word."

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So Adam heard God's Word even before the fall. He heard the 'Voice of the Lord' God Almighty. He heard that same Word of God which speaks to us from Scripture whenever we read the Bible even in family worship every day.

Also our first parents are thus seen to have practised daily household worship – right from the very time of their creation onward; in Eden; and even before the

⁷ *Comm.* on Gen. 2:16-21.

⁸ *Comm.* on Gen. 2:22f.

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fall. For such daily household worship is a necessary consequence of their having been created as the very image of God.

Indeed, daily family worship – however weakened by human sin – can and should continue also after the fall. For even fallen man at least in the broader sense still remains the image of God. Genesis 9:6; James 3:9.

As a sinful being, fallen man's need to worship God is now necessarily greater than it was before his fall and at his creation. Yet even then, man already needed, and in fact also practised, daily household worship.

Britain's greatest poet – the Puritan John Milton⁹ – discussed this matter with pertinent poignancy. Thus did he express his views about the first joint prayers of Adam and Eve together, before their fall:

"Soon as they forth were come to open sight
of dayspring and the sun who, scarce uprisen,
with wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean brim
that parallel to the Earth his dewy ray
discovering in wide landscape all the east
of Paradise and Eden's happy plains –
lowly they bowed adoring, and began
their orisons each morning duly paid
in various style. For neither various style
nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
their Maker. In fit strains pronounced or sung,
unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
flowed from their lips in prose or numerous verse
more tunable than needed lute or harp
to add more sweetness. And they thus began."

Not just Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Milton have expressed such views; but also Herman Bavinck – and, "suprahistorically"(!), even Karl Barth. For such views seem to be implied in Holy Scripture. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:1-3; 2:21-25; 3:8-15f; 4:1-4,26; 5:1-5; Hebrews 11:3-4.

God created Adam and Eve. Later, He gave them a family. The Lord did so in order that mankind, even in families, might worship the Triune God. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, at its very outset, stated it thus:¹⁰ "Man's chief

⁹ *B.M. Palmer: The Family in its Civil and Churchly Aspects*, Richmond Va.: Presb. Committee of Pub., 1876, p. 11.

¹⁰ *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, in *Subordinate Standards of Free Church*, Edinburgh: Church Offices, 1933, Q. & A. 1.

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end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever. First Corinthians 10:31; Romans 11:36; Psalm 73:25-28."

This chief end of man today, was pre-eminently also the chief end of Adam and his household at the very beginning of history. Even in the human home before the fall – to 'glorify' God also included the need of worshipping Him.

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Well did Rev. Alexander Smith Paterson comment on this. He did so in his *Concise System of Theology on the Basis of the Shorter Catechism*.

There, he declared:¹¹ "The chief end of man's creation...was the enjoyment of God for ever. To enjoy God, is to acquiesce or rest in God as the Chief Good, with complacency and delight...; to feel unspeakably happy in His presence. Psalm 116:7....

"The condition of the covenant was perfect obedience [Hosea 6:7].... The obedience required, was a regard to the whole Law of God – that Law which was written on man's heart at his creation." Compare Romans 1:20f & 2:14f with Exodus 20:3-12f.

"With respect to the nature of this obedience, it was necessary that it should be – 1. Perfect in respect of its principle.... 2. Perfect in parts.... 3. Perfect in degrees.... 4. Perfect in duration (without interruption while God should continue him in the state of trial). Galatians 3:10....

"Our first parents were left to the freedom of their own will.... They [could] freely choose good, through a principle of grace implanted in them by the Spirit of God...[though] being created mutable."

Similarly, even after the fall, "in this life the believer increases in grace" – though now immutably so. "He grows upward in love.... He grows outwardly by a life of holiness.... The believer perseveres.... [This] is evident...from the prayers of the believers" – and "from the continued influences of the Holy Spirit." Thus Rev. A.S. Paterson.

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The *Westminster Confession* insists¹² "God...created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls endued with knowledge, righteous-ness and

¹¹ New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1859, pp. 29,60-62,144f.

¹² 4:2.

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true holiness after His own image." Thus He created them with "the Law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it. ... While they kept [it], they were happy in their communion with God. Genesis 1:27f; 1:26; Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24; Romans 2:14f; [and] Ecclesiastes 7:29."

Similarly, so too the longer companion document¹³ known as the *Westminster Larger Catechism*. Indeed, the latter also adds¹⁴ that God blessed the worshipping Adam – precisely when He "ordained marriage for his help," and also by "affording him communion with Himself."

This God did, for Adam and all his descendants, by "instituting the Sabbath" and by "entering into a covenant of life with him – upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience.... Genesis 1:28; 1:26-29; 3:8; 2:3; Galatians 3:12; Romans 10:5." See too Hosea 6:7.

The *Westminster Confession* itself¹⁵ even links all of this to daily family worship. It concludes that because the unfallen Adam kept God's Law perfectly – he must also have prayed to God each day. Indeed, because the unfallen Adam was the federal head and ancestor of the entire human race – all mankind, if it had never fallen, would also have prayed to God each day.

Thus, the whole of Adam's family – and also as a family – would have prayed together each day. Thus did faithful Adam, before the creation of Eve. Thus would his entire household too have done – had he not later sinned.

Indeed, Adam's family – like all other families descended from that first family – was required to keep on praying daily. This was so, even after the fall. Accordingly, the *Confession* also¹⁶ rightly concludes that "prayer...is by God required of all men"; and also that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily."

For the *Confession* states¹⁷ that "God gave to Adam a Law as a covenant of works by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience." Moreover, God also gave to the unfallen Adam "power and ability to keep it" – namely that Law of God. "Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12; 5:17; Galatians 3:10; Job 28:28" *etc.*

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¹³ *Westminster Larger Catechism*, in *Sub. Stand.*, Q. & A. 17.

¹⁴ Q. & A. 20.

¹⁵ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, in *Sub. Stand.*, chs. 19-21.

¹⁶ 19:3,6.

¹⁷ 19:1.

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Now the *Confession* explains¹⁸ about Adam that "this Law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness." As such, it "was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in Ten Commandments and written in two tables – the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man. James 1:25; 2:8-12; Romans 13:8f; Deuteronomy 5:32; 10:4; Exodus 34:1; Matthew 22:37-40."

Next,¹⁹ the *Confession* insists that this "Moral Law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof..., also in respect of the authority of God the Creator Who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve but much strengthen this obligation. Ephesians 6:2; First John 2:3-8; Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31."

Indeed, the *Confession* then goes on to explain²⁰ about the Decalogue that the Christian should now "sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God revealed in the Law requireth to be done.... Galatians 3:21; Ezekiel 36:27; Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 33:33." See Second Corinthians 3:18.

On the above basis, the *Confession* next goes on²¹ to point out that "prayer with thanksgiving...is by God required of all men.... Philippians 4:6 & Psalm 65:2." Hence, it insists²² that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily.... Malachi 1:11; First Timothy 2:8; Jeremiah 10:25; Deuteronomy 6:6f; Job 1:5; Second Samuel 6:18-20; First Peter 3:7; Acts 10:2; Matthew 6:11" etc.

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Let us now hear the views of the one who is probably Britain's greatest theologian – the seventeenth-century Puritan Rev. Dr. John Owen. Said he:²³ "The nature and being of God is the foundation of all true religion and holy religious worship in the world.

"The great end for which we were made...is to worship Him.... For He 'made all things for Himself' or His own glory, Proverbs 16:4, to be rendered unto Him according to the abilities and capacities that He hath furnished them withal. Revelation 4:11....

¹⁸ 19:2.

¹⁹ 19:5.

²⁰ 19:7.

²¹ 21:3.

²² 21:6.

²³ *Works*, London: Banner of Truth, 1966 ed., III, pp. 64 & 102f.

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"Adam may be said to have had the Spirit of God in his innocency.... It was possible that he should utterly lose Him.... But in all men – from first to last – all goodness, righteousness and truth are the 'fruits of the Spirit,' Ephesians 5:9."

Continued Owen:²⁴ "Adam, in the state of innocency, besides his natural life whereby he was a living soul, had likewise a supernatural life with respect unto its end, whereby he lived unto God. This is called the 'life of God,' Ephesians 4:18 – which men now in the state of [fallen] nature are alienated from – the life which God requires, and which hath God for its object and end...."

"This life was in him [Adam] supernatural.... This, in Adam, was the image of God or an habitual conformity unto God, His mind and will.... In this image, he was created.... This gave him an habitual disposition unto all duties of that obedience that was required of him...."

"All the acts of Adam's life should have been subordinate unto his great moral end.... The life which we had in Adam, and that which we are renewed unto in Christ Jesus, are so far of the same nature and kind – as our apostle manifests in sundry places, Ephesians 4:23-24 [&] Colossians 3:10 – as that they serve to the same end and purpose."

Now Owen cited, in his *Catechism*, family worship passages like Genesis 18:19 and Deuteronomy 6:18 [cf. verses 6-9] – specifically with reference to 'the nature of man' before the fall. This clearly indicates Owen's implicit endorsement of the unfallen Adam's domestic household devotions.

Question 1 of Owen's *Catechism* asked:²⁵ "What doth God require of us...that He may be glorified by us, and we be accepted with Him?" The answer is: "That we worship Him in and by the ways of His own appointment. Matthew 4:10...; Deuteronomy 6:13...; Genesis 18:19" *etc.*

In his *Explication* of this, Owen then added that "the Law...was originally written in the heart of man" and that "this worship is called natural.... First, because it depends on the nature of God.... Secondly, because it was in the principle of it concreated [or simultaneously made in and] with the nature of man – as that which...enabled him to answer the Law of his creation requiring this obedience of him in his dependence on God."

Owen then made it quite clear that he was talking also about ancient family worship in particular. As regards God's "observance" of man's obedience in this

²⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 284-86.

²⁵ *Ib.*, XV, pp. 447f.

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regard, Owen explained²⁶ that the Lord certainly did "so approve of Abraham. Genesis 18:19."

Indeed, Owen even continued: "We renounce...our inward dependence on Him...in not observing His commands – as Adam did in transgressing" when he fell into sin by abandoning his pre-fall 'natural worship' of Jehovah. For we men "express and profess our inward 'moral-natural worship' of God" – in worshipping Him in the way of the pre-fall Adam or the faithful Abraham. Genesis 18:19 compare 1:26-28 & 2:21-25.

Moreover, explained Owen, this is "a most effectual help and assistance unto the principle of that natural worship – strengthening the habit of it, and exciting it unto all suitable actings unto its increase and growth." For "all men saw by nature...that God...was constantly and solemnly to be worshipped...not only by individual persons but by societies together...so [that] they might own and honour Him Whom they took for their God."

This is why, continued Owen,²⁷ "the apostle convinces and dis[ap]proves...men acting against the light of nature and principles of reason. Romans 1:20-21.... The end wherefore God granted His Word" – even to Adam and his household in terms of 'natural worship' before the fall – was that "it might be instructed in his mind and will, as to what concerns the worship and obedience that He requireth of us and which is accepted with Him.

"This the whole Scripture itself everywhere declares and speaks out unto all that do receive it; as [in] Second Timothy 3:15-17," that great passage on family worship (*cf.* 3:14f with 1:3-5). Indeed: before the fall the "worship whereof we speak" was "natural or moral – arising necessarily from the dependence of the rational creature on God as its First Cause."

Owen went on:²⁸ "The original righteousness wherein Adam was created, had comprehended the integrity and perfection of the whole man – not only that whereby the body was obedient unto the soul...but also a light, uprightness and holiness of grace into the mind and will, whereby he was enabled to yield obedience unto God for the attaining of that supernatural end whereunto he was created."

²⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 448f.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 449-51.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, X p 84 & XIII pp. 14f.

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The same applies even in later times. For then too, stated Owen, "the paternal teaching and instruction of families in things which appertain to God – being a duty of the law of nature – remained in its full vigour and was not at all impaired by the institution of a new order of teachers for assemblies beyond domestical, then established. Neither, without doubt, ought it to cease amongst Christians – there being no other reason why now it should.... The people of God were...enjoined also to read the [Holy] Scriptures...upon all occasions, in their own houses and elsewhere; to talk of them, or communicate their knowledge in them unto others."

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In a subsequent chapter below, we will explain what daily family worship meant to South Africa's greatest theologian, Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray Jr. At this point, however, we would only point out that Murray implicitly regarded even the household of the pre-fall Adam – the federal head of the entire human race – as having held daily devotions to Jehovah.

Wrote Murray:²⁹ "Every teacher knows the power of example.... Our Heavenly Teacher [in Matthew 6:11] has given us the very words we are to take with us, as we draw near to our Father.... 'Give us this day our daily bread!' When first the child has yielded himself to the Father [*cf.* Luke 3:38]...he has full liberty to ask for his daily bread."

It is significant that Murray rightly linked the above to the task of mankind as such, even before the fall. Then too – indeed, especially then – man, as the image of God, was to reflect His glory by worshipping Him.

"In man himself," explained Murray, "the image he bears decides his destiny.... Prayer is part of the wondrous likeness he bears to his divine origin.... Man's destiny appears clearly from God's language at creation. It was to fill; to subdue; to have dominion – over the Earth, and all in it [Genesis 1:26f]....

"As God's representative, man was to have ruled.... On his advice, and at his request, Heaven was to have bestowed its blessing on Earth" – in answer to Adam's prayerful worship of the Lord of Heaven.

"His prayer was to have been the...natural channel in which the intercourse between the King in Heaven and His faithful servant man as lord of this Earth was to have been maintained. The destinies of the World were given into the power of the wishes, the will, the prayer of man.

²⁹ *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, Old Tappan N.J.: Revell, 1974 ed., pp. 27-30 & 100-4.

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"What sin destroyed, grace has restored. What the first Adam lost, the Second has won back. In Christ, man regains his original position – and the Church, abiding in Christ, inherits the promise....

"Church of the living God, your calling is higher and holier than you know! Through your members, as kings and priests unto God, would God rule the World. Their prayers bestow, and withhold, the blessings of Heaven.

"In His elect who are not just content to be saved themselves, but who yield themselves wholly – [so] that through them, even as through the Son, the Father may fulfil all His glorious counsel – in these His elect who cry out unto Him day and night, God would prove how wonderful man's original destiny was.... Man was created, and has now again been redeemed – to pray; and, by his prayer, to have dominion.

"Lord! What is man, that Thou art mindful of him...? For Thou hast...crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet. O Lord, our Lord! How excellent is Thy Name in all the Earth!" Psalm 8:2-9 *cf.* Matthew 21:15f & Genesis 1:26-28.

Here, the South African Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray Jr. fully grasped the 'daily family worship' implications of man's pre-fall tasks. So too did the greatest Dutch theologian of all time – Holland's Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr.

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Dr. Kuyper held³⁰ we were federally "in Adam when he was created.... The root of our life...goes back through the long line of generations, and received its earliest beginning when Adam first breathed God's pure air in Paradise.... The nature of sinful man repels the Holy Spirit. But Adam's [original and sinless] nature attracted Him; freely received Him; and let Him inspire his being....

"Let us consider the interesting but much-neglected question whether man stood in fellowship with the Holy Spirit before the fall." The truth is this: "The original Adam returns in the regenerated man.

"It follows that the Holy Spirit must have dwelt in Adam, as He now dwells in God's children.... [Yet] God's Word teaches the following differences between the two. 1. Adam's treasure was losable; but that of God's children, unlosable. 2. The former was to obtain eternal life, while the latter already possess it."

³⁰ *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941 ed., pp. 34f & 273.

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However, continued Kuyper,³¹ "maintaining the approved doctrine of Adam's original righteousness as inherent in his nature, and of the divine image as being in-created – an important question arises. Was the fellowship of the Holy Spirit enjoyed by Adam the same as that possessed now by the new-born soul?"

Here Kuyper answers: "In Adam, all goodness was wrought by the Holy Spirit – according to the holy ordinance which assigns to the Third Person in the Trinity the inward operation of all rational beings.... With Adam, his nature was created and calculated to be a vehicle of the Holy Spirit's operations. Hence, Adam and the regenerated are similar in this respect – that in both there is no goodness not wrought by the Holy Spirit."

As far as Adam's children and our own children are concerned, Kuyper adds that "the faculty of prayer is not an acquisition of later years, but is created in us – inherent in the root of our being, inseparable from our nature.... We owe the faculty of prayer to our creation.

"God created man as a being disposed to prayer. If this were not so, the faculty of prayer could not be among his endowments. We are created for prayer.... To the question: Why in our creation is this a peculiar work of the Holy Spirit? – we answer: Prayer is the drawing and pressing of the impressed image toward its Origin, Which is the Triune God."³²

Abraham Kuyper, just like Andrew Murray, also saw the 'family worship' implications of Adam's pre-fall daily prayers. He detected this, in the light of Genesis 1:26f & Psalm 8:2f *cf.* Matthew 21:15f.

Wrote Kuyper:³³ "Adam knew no prayer for dire needs – just as little as that can exist in the Kingdom of glory." Yet even the unfallen Adam prayed. Indeed, he prayed to (and praised and worshipped) his great Creator-Enlightener-Preserver, the Triune God – daily.

Continued Kuyper: "Prayer must first of all be regarded as worship.... Prayer, as praise, is brought to God by the entire creation. Compare, *inter alia*, Psalm 148.... The angels are the first to be called upon to worship praisingly.... Only after that...does the call to man follow....

"We find the same in Psalm 8:2 *etc.*.... Only now can Psalm 8:2 – cited by Jesus in Matthew 21:16 – rightly be understood. 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings You have ordained strength'....

³¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 275-77.

³² *Op. cit.*, pp. 629f.

³³ *Dogmatic Dictations*, Kampen: Kok, 2nd ed., n.d., *Loc. de Prov.*, pp. 195-97.

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"Both the context and the Hebrew words do not indicate children of seven or eight years old – but tiny children not yet conscious.... Even such a small child expresses itself to God, Who hears and heeds.

"We also find this in the story of Hagar, where we read that the Lord heard the lad (Genesis 21:17). The young fellow was still only a child. Yet an expression proceeded from him which did not pass God's eye without being noticed....

"He who comes to God in prayer, needs to know that He is – and that He is a Rewarder of those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6)." Indeed, this has been so – ever since the *aioonas* (or 'world-ages') were framed by the Word of God (Hebrews 11:3), in the days of Adam and Eve and Abel (Hebrews 11:4).

* * * * *

Professor Bavinck, Kuyper's brilliant contemporary, was even clearer. Said Dr. Bavinck:³⁴ "All the essential components now here, existed even before the fall – the difference and the dissimilarity between men and women; between parents and children...; the manifold institutions and relationships in social life (such as marriage, family, education, *etc.*); the interchange of day and night, working days and the day of rest, labour and relaxation....

"Adam was not created alone.... He lacked something.... As a man alone, he was therefore not yet the fully-unfolded image of God. Man's creation in the image of God was completed only on the sixth day – when God created both man and woman according to His image, in connection with one another....

"Yet even this creation of man and woman as God's image together, was only the beginning of God's way with man.... God immediately pronounced His blessing of multiplication over both of them. Genesis 1:28.... God's image is much too rich to be embodied in only one single human being, however richly endowed he may be. Only in a humanity with millions of members, can it to some extent be unfolded in its depth and richness.

"Holy Scripture also tells us," Bavinck continued,³⁵ "that 'sacrifice' [alias man's religious act of bringing offerings of whatever type to God] had already existed from humanity's most ancient times. Before the fall, this is not mentioned. Yet there is nothing irreconcilable with the idea that even then, 'sacrifice' in the broader sense belonged to the elements of religion – just as much as prayer then did." Compare Hebrews 11:3-6 & 13:15-16.

³⁴ *Reformed Dogmatics*, Kampen: Kok, II p. 538.

³⁵ *Ib.*, III pp. 310f & 537.

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Rev. Professor Herman Bavinck continued: "According to the description of Augustine (*City of God* X:6), 'a true sacrifice [alias an "offering"] is every work which is done so that we may be united to God in holy fellowship.' As such, it was suitable to man also in the state of integrity.

"He had – after all – been created according to God's image in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. He was a prophet, a priest, and a king. It was as such that he was to glorify God's Name – [and] dedicate himself to God with all that he had....

"In the Sabbath, too" – explained Bavinck of the pre-fall Adam – "he received a special day for the service of God – which also needed special forms of worship for it... To that, in addition to prayer, also offerings belonged.... God gave the Earth to man, and appointed him as lord over it. That is why man is able to offer something to God, in a symbolic sense – as an evidence of his respect and dependence....

"From the very beginning, sacrifice [or 'offering'] belonged to man's religion. This could not be different, essentially, before the fall – from what it was thereafter.

"This easily explains how the sacrifice of Cain and of Abel [Genesis 4:3f] could be spoken about, soon after the fall, without God [then] deliberately instituting religious sacrifices." Indeed, even "immediately after the fall [Genesis 3:6-11], God Himself makes coats of skins from animals [sacrificed]. And Abel too brings a sacrifice – which was certainly also accompanied by a sacrificial meal."

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So we say that Adam praised God as soon as he first became conscious. Right after his creation from the dust, he 'woke up' – praying to God and hearing His Word. Later that same day, the unfallen Adam would pray again – at least right before he fell asleep. And the unfallen Adam no doubt also praised God yet once more – when he again woke up.

Indeed, first Adam would praise the Lord. Next, Eve herself would praise the Lord. Then both of them together would praise the Lord – at mankind's first household devotions ever.

So Adam rose up from his deep sleep – refreshed! The Lord God roused him up, and gifted him with Eve. God spoke His Word to them, and said: "Be fruitful; subjugate this World!"

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Six days the Lord Himself had worked; and now He rests in man, His image. So man must likewise work for God – six days each week. The poet Adam praised the Lord for Eve. With her, he bowed his head and answered God. Something like this he must have prayed:

"Jehovah, You are great! Yes, all Your works are very good!
This woman, Lord, You took from me – to give to me.
I'll cleave to her – and raise our seed for You.
Each day we'll teach our children praise and prayer and work.
Each week, they'll worship You – through sabbath-rests.
In time, when they've grown up, they'll leave and wed.

"Then, they will teach their families – how to live for You.
Six days You'll speak; then they will pray and praise at morn and night.
On sabbath days, each week – they'll rest in You.
Each year, they'll climb up more than fifty sabbath steps –
from Earth, to Heaven's everlasting rest.
Then, at the end – good men will rest with You
in never-ending bliss!"

On their very first sabbath, our (then still sinless) first parents would have rested and worshipped God – all the day. When night would then have arrived, they would have worshipped God again – and thereafter slept.

The following day would have been their first working-day together. On the morning thereof, they would: have risen and worshipped God with domestic devotions – in praise; in listening to God's Word; and in prayer. Thereafter, they would have worked for Him from dawn till dusk. Then they would have come to God in household worship that night – then slept again.

Subsequently, they would have worshipped on the morrow; worked again throughout that day; then worshipped anew at night. Thus, daily, our first parents would have kept on worshipping God as a household – every morning, and each evening: day by day. But sadly, very soon – they sinned and fell.

* * * * *

Before their fall, God's Word initially came to our first parents at their incipient household devotions – apparently early in the morning of their first full day together. Genesis 1:26-31; 2:1-3; 2:21-24. Then, apparently during the subsequent day-time, they both fell into grievous sin. Genesis 3:1-6. Compare here the statement in Psalm 49:12 that even when "man was in honour, he did not abide" – literally, "he did not lodge the night."

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However, after their fall, and apparently at their other household devotion time at evening, alias 'in the cool of the day' – God's Word again came to our first parents. Genesis 3:8f. Indeed, it now came – to save their souls. Genesis 3:15-21. See the Rabbins, Luther, Tostatus, Pererius, Tractatus, Ainsworth, Fisher, *etc.*³⁶

Thus, even after their fall, our first parents still continued to worship God and to hear His Word each day – and probably every morning and evening. This was apparently so both before and after their expulsion from the garden.

For there they heard the Voice of the Lord 'in the cool of the day.' There they believed God's Word, and its new gospel promise. From then on, they daily yearned for the advent of their Saviour – and brought their sacrificial offerings to the Lord, at "the end of the days" each week. See Genesis 4:3f.

Indeed, such regular worship of Jehovah long continued – among the near descendants of Adam's son the believer Seth, and especially in the days of Enos. For particularly then, godly men (and women and children) regularly met together "to call upon the Name of the Lord."³⁷

Going back to Adam right at the time of his fall, let us again hear Calvin. Wrote he:³⁸ "The prohibition to touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was a trial of obedience.... The very term shows the end of the precept to have been to keep him [Adam] contented with his lot....

"The first man revolted against the authority of God...by despising the truth, and turning aside.... Assuredly, when the Word of God is despised, all reverence for Him is gone.... Never would Adam have dared to show any repugnance to the command of God, if he had not been incredulous to His Word."

Yet, soon after the fall, Adam and Eve once again 'heard the Voice of the Lord God...in the cool of the day.' Even in their sin, God's Word thus came to them [again] – apparently at 'household worship time' or "in the cool of the day" or at the time of a refreshing breeze toward evening.

Here, the ancient Hebrew text has: 'in the Breath' (or 'in the Wind' or 'in the Spirit') – *viz.* 'in the Breath of the day' or 'in the Wind of the day.' The B.C. 270 Greek translation of that Hebrew, has: 'in the late afternoon' or 'at evening.' Thus Cocceius, Gesenius, and Samuel Lee.

³⁶ F.N. Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath*, London: Lord's Day Observance Society, 1972, pp. 79-81.

³⁷ Gen. 3:8-20; 4:1-4,26; 5:1-5.

³⁸ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, London: Clarke, 1957, II:1:4.

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The Alexandrine text has: 'at the cooling after midday.' Jerome's Vulgate has: 'at the cooling of the day' or 'at the breeze after midday.' Martin Luther translates: 'because the day had cooled down.' It was, then, at that time of the day – and once more through His Own Holy Word – that "the Lord God called to Adam." Genesis 3:8-9.

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Calvin commented³⁹ that the Hebrew term 'at the wind of the day' may well mean: 'about sunrise' – early in the morning. "As soon as the Voice of God sounds, Adam and Eve perceive." This occurred, "in the Hebrew, 'at the wind of the day'.... The Greeks...have put: 'at the evening'....

"Being covered with their garment," Calvin explained of the fallen Adam and Eve, "they passed the night in silence and quiet.... Then, about sunrise, being again thoroughly awakened, they recollected themselves....

"What was hid[den] under the darkness of the night, was detected at the rising of the sun.... Some notable symbol of the presence of God was in that gentle breeze.... The rising sun is wont daily to stir up some breath of air.... God gave some extraordinary sign of His approach, to arouse the consciences of Adam and his wife."

We ourselves believe that both Luther and Calvin were here correct. As before the fall, so now thereafter – and ever since. Adam and Eve indeed heard the Voice of God 'at the rising of the sun' (thus Calvin and Le Clerc) – at the 'morning household worship time.' Compare too Genesis 2:21 to 3:3f.

Yet Adam and Eve also heard God's Word when 'the day had cooled off' (thus Luther and many others); 'at evening' (thus the Septuagint *etc.*) – at the 'evening household worship time' as well. For it was then 'in the cool of the day' – as both previously and subsequently, in the cool of the morning as well as in the cool of the evening – that 'the Lord God called to Adam.' Genesis 3:8f *cf.* too Exodus 29:38-42 & Numbers 28:3-8 & Hebrews 13:8 & 13:15f.

³⁹ Comm. on Gen. 3:8f.

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For such provisions are regulated by the Second Commandment (requiring man to worship God aright) and by the Fourth Commandment (requiring man to worship God at regular times). Both of these two Commandments – together with the rest of the ten – were indelibly stamped into the heart of Adam before the fall. Indeed, they were never totally erased even thereafter. Ecclesiastes 7:29; Exodus 20:4-6 & 20:8-11; Romans 2:14-16.

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As the *Westminster Confession of Faith* reminds us:⁴⁰ "God gave to Adam a Law.... This Law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness and – as such – was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in Ten Commandments." This teaching is reinforced also by the *Larger Catechism*.

For also the *Catechism* explains:⁴¹ "The duties required in the Second Commandment are: the receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in His Word – [and] particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the Name of Christ; [and] the reading, preaching and hearing of the Word.... Deuteronomy 32:46-47; Matthew 28:20; Acts 2:42; First Timothy 6:13-14; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 5:20; Deuteronomy 17:18-19; Acts 15:21; Second Timothy 4:2; James 1:21-22; Acts 2:33....

"The Fourth Commandment requireth of all men, the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as He hath appointed in His Word.... The charge of keeping the Sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families..., because they are bound not only to keep it themselves but [also] to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge." Exodus 20:10; Joshua 24:15; Exodus 23:12; *etc.* "Sins receive their aggravations...from circumstances of time...[viz.] on the Lord's day or other times of divine worship."

Indeed, the *Westminster Confession* itself here elaborates:⁴² "The light of nature sheweth that...God...is...to be...praised; called upon; trusted in.... Prayer with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men....

"Prayer...and...reading of the Scriptures...and...hearing of the Word... [with] singing of Psalms...are in their several times and seasons to be used in a holy and religious manner.... God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily.... It is of the Law of Nature that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God" – even "**daily**."

⁴⁰ W.C.F., 19:1-2.

⁴¹ W.L.C., QQ. & AA. 108-16.

⁴² W.C.F., 21:1-7.

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Now it was a message of salvation which God brought to our first parents 'in the cool of the day' – and very soon after they had fallen. For the Voice of the Lord brought to both of them the first promise of the Gospel regarding the coming Seed of the woman – Jesus Christ the Saviour. God right then made them that promise – in spite of the curse 'all the days' of their lives, because of their sin. Genesis 3:8-15f.

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This salvation in Christ, promised on the very day of man's fall – was also to be commemorated in daily household worship 'all the days' of the lives of Adam and Eve. Hence, Calvin here went on to give a very valuable comment.

John Calvin explained⁴³ that "God often remits a portion of this curse to His own children.... To which purpose, this passage is appropriate: 'Some will rise early and go late to rest...; but the Lord will give sleep to His [own] beloved.' Psalm 127:2. So far, truly, as those things which had been polluted in Adam are repaired by the grace of Christ – the pious feel more deeply that God is good, and enjoy the sweetness of His paternal indulgence."

This is why John Calvin could also make a very positive comment on the post-fall words: 'So Adam called his wife's name "Eve" – because she was the mother of all living.' Genesis 3:21.

Commented Calvin: "There are those who think that Adam, animated by the hope of a more happy condition – because God had promised that the head of the serpent should be wounded by the Seed of the woman – called her by a name ['Eve'] implying 'life' [*cf.* the Hebrew *Ch-ev-ah* alias 'Living']. This would be a noble and even heroic fortitude of mind.... I do not doubt that, when he [Adam] heard the declaration of God concerning the prolongation of life, he began again to breathe and to take courage.... As one revived, he gave his wife a name derived from 'life.'"

Similarly, the Dutch Professor J. Polyander's *Synopsis of Purer Theology*. As the famous German Hebraist Professor Paul Fagius observes: Adam comforted himself in his wife, because he would through Eve produce a posterity in which (as parents in their children) they would be permanently victorious.⁴⁴

Also the great British theologian Rev. Dr. John Owen expressed himself in similar terms. Owen remarked⁴⁵ that "Adam himself had many things revealed

⁴³ *Comm.* on Gen. 3:19.

⁴⁴ *Comm.* on Gen. 3:20, & fn. 2 (by ed. J. King) in I p. 181.

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, III p. 128.

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unto him, without which he could not have worshipped God aright in that state and condition whereinto he was come" – after the fall. Yet, even before that time – "his natural light was sufficient to direct him unto all religious services required to the law of creation.

"Yet it was not so....after the entrance of sin. So was he guided unto the observance of such ordinances of worship as were needful for him and accepted with God – as were sacrifices [*cf.* Genesis 3:21 & 4:3 *etc.*]."

The pre-fall 'natural light' as regards even household worship was now much magnified by post-fall special revelation. This latter would then still more ensure the continuation of the former – though henceforth with also a redemptive focus – even after the fall. Ephesians 5:30 to 6:5.

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After the exit of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, their children Cain and Abel were born and raised. Doubtless they were both carefully trained, by their parents, at regular family worship.

When they grew up. Cain became a tiller of the soil; Abel, a shepherd. So, 'at the end of the days' or "in process of time...Cain brought some of the fruit of the ground as an offering to the Lord. But Abel indeed brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of their fat. So the Lord respected Abel and his offering. But He did not respect Cain and his offering." Genesis 4:2-5.

Cain had not done aright, so was not accepted by the Lord. Genesis 4:7. For "by faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.... Without faith" – as in the case of the faithless Cain – "it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that...He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:4-6.

Calvin's comment on the above clearly shows that Adam's household had been practising regular family worship. Indeed, that household had been doing so not just ever since it embraced the first gospel promise right after the fall. Genesis 3:15f *cf.* First Timothy 2:14-15. It had also been doing so even before the fall. Genesis 2:23-25 *cf.* First Peter 3:7.

For Calvin explained⁴⁶ that even Cain – now grown up, and with a household of his own – had previously been given regular religious education in the home of Adam and Eve. Indeed, continued Calvin, both Cain and Abel "had been well-instructed by their father.

⁴⁶ *Comm.* on Gen. 4:2f,7.

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"The rite of sacrificing more fully confirms this. Because it proves that they had been accustomed to the worship of God" (at the very least in the outward sense).

Of course, as to the very important matter of motive, Cain and Abel were poles apart. Nevertheless, continued Calvin: "The life of Cain...was – in appearance – very well regulated.... He cultivated the duties of piety toward God, and sought a maintenance for himself and his, by honest and just labour – as became [or behooved] a provident and sober father of a family [*cf.* Genesis 4:17]....

"The first men, though they had been deprived of the sacrament of divine love when they were prohibited from the tree of life, had yet been only so deprived of it that a hope of salvation was still left to them. Of this they had the signs – in sacrifices."

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But Cain was not alone in bringing his own gift to God. At the very same time, and probably also contemporaneously with Adam's family worship, Cain's brother Abel too is stated to have brought his own gift to God.

This, apparently, was also a part of the overall worship pattern in Adam's family. For Abel obviously rendered his sacrifice at the same 'family worship time' when the outwardly-complying but inwardly-faithless Cain brought his own gift to God.

So Calvin next addressed the matter of the faithful sacrifice brought by Abel. For unlike Cain, it was by faith that Abel gave his gift to God.

Commented the great Protestant Reformer: "Since the Apostle refers the dignity of Abel's accepted sacrifice to faith, it follows first that he had not offered it without the command of God (Hebrews 11:4). Secondly, it has been true from the beginning of the world that obedience is better than any sacrifices (First Samuel 15:22)....

"Hence, it also follows that man had been taught by God what was pleasing to Him.... Since God has been always like Himself, we may not say that He was ever delighted with mere carnal and external worship. Yet He deemed those sacrifices of the first age acceptable. It follows therefore further, that they had been offered to Him spiritually."

The great Genevan Reformer reflected also on the post-fall religious condition of Adam and Abel. Stated Calvin: "Certainly they could not sincerely devote their mind to the worship of God – unless they had been assured of His benevolence....

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"We may infer...that the command respecting sacrifice was given to the fathers from the beginning. First, for the purpose of making the exercise of piety common to all: seeing they professed themselves to be the property of God.... Secondly, for the purpose of admonishing them of the necessity of some expiation: in order to their reconciliation with God....

"I explain...(referring to sacrifices)...that God will accept them when rightly offered.... The oblation will be accepted, as pleasant and of good odour – if it be pure and legitimate." See: Exodus 29:38-42 and Numbers 28:3-8 and Psalm 55:17 and Hebrews 3:7-13 & 10:22-25 & 13:15f etc.

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After the death of Abel, God gave Adam another son – called Seth. Indeed, Adam also fathered yet other sons and daughters. Later still, when Seth had grown up, he himself married – and had a son called Enos.

Throughout this whole time, family worship doubtless continued in the home of Adam, in the home of Seth, and also in the homes of such other sons and daughters of Adam who remained faithful also after growing up. Seth too had other sons and daughters, after the birth of Enos and his being instructed in the true religion. Genesis 4:25 to 5:7f.

'Then men began to call upon the Name of the Lord.' Genesis 4:26. This apparently refers to the institution of the congregational worship of several godly families all together. Indeed, this necessarily presupposes – as its foundation – the various household worship services of several families. Thus began the religious group now known as the **congregation**.

Calvin commented here⁴⁷ that this "embraces generally the whole worship of God.... God prefers this service of piety and faith to all sacrifices.... The entire pomp of adoration is worth nothing, unless the chief point of worshipping God aright be maintained....

"Moses does not here censure depraved superstitions, but commends the piety of one family [the Sethites] which worshipped God in purity and holiness when religion among other people [the Cainites] was polluted or extinct.... [Hence] Adam and Eve, with a few other of their children, were themselves true worshippers of God.

"We may readily conclude that Seth was an upright and faithful servant of God.... After he begat a son like himself and had a rightly-constituted family, the

⁴⁷ *Comm.* on Gen. 4:26.

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face of the Church distinctly began to appear.... That worship of God was set up which might continue to posterity. Such a restoration of religion has been effected also in our time."

By the latter sentence, Calvin was of course referring to his own age – namely that when the Protestant Reformers were reformatting the mediaeval Roman Catholic Church. However, he then again went on to compare such mediaeval Romanism with the former time of the Cainites and all their "gross contempt of God" and "superstition."

In those antediluvian days, as too among the Romanists in Calvin's own later time, "both evils must then have prevailed everywhere" – namely the twin evils of "gross contempt of God" and "superstition." Yet nevertheless, "Moses relates...that there was [even] at that time a single family [namely the clan of the Sethite Church] in which the worship of God arose."

However, the awful apostasy of the children of Adam's other son Cain – the Cainites – deepened all the time. But later yet, even while living in a most ungodly Cainite society, Enoch the godly Sethite still faithfully "kept on walking with God" – each day, and "all the days" of his life.

Indeed, Enoch apparently did so for 365 days annually. And he persisted – until, aged 365 years – he entered his own everlasting rest. Genesis 4:26; 5:18f; Hebrews 11:5f; Jude 14f.

Commented Calvin⁴⁸ about this Enoch: "Moses says that he was a just man, and that 'he walked with God.' But, since justice begins with faith, the fact that he pleased God is properly attributed to his faith." Compare Hebrews 11:5 and Jude 14f.

John Owen pointed out⁴⁹ that "the prophecy of Enoch is not only remembered, but called over and recorded. Jude 14-15. And it is a matter neither curious nor difficult to demonstrate, that all the patriarchs of old before the flood were guided by a prophetic spirit in the imposition of names on those children who were to succeed them in the sacred line."

* * * * *

Extremely interesting are the comments on Enoch's family, and on his own forefathers, made by perhaps the greatest of all Baptists. We refer to the

⁴⁸ *Comm.* on Heb. 11:5.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, III p. 128.

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comments of Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon – in his own *Treasury of the Old Testament*, as well as in his *Treasury of the New Testament*.

When preaching from Genesis 5:21-24 (with Hebrews 11:5f and Jude 14f), Spurgeon declared⁵⁰ that "Enoch walked with God.... It must be to walk with God – by the figure of a father's taking his little son by the hand and walking forth with him....

"Enoch was a family man.... You cannot live as you like, if you have a lot of children about you. Do not tell me about keeping up [only] your [very own] hours of prayer and quiet reading of the Scriptures, if you have a large family of little ones.... 'Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters'.... Thus, you see, he was...a family man.... Yet he walked with God for more than three hundred years. There is no need to be a hermit or to renounce the married life in order to live near to God!"

Preaching from Philemon 1:2, on the sermon subject of the 'church' in Philemon's house – and reminiscent of the earlier 'church' in the house of Enoch – Spurgeon concluded: "I may be excused, perhaps, for referring to God's singular mercy to my own household. What a blessing it is to my father and mother, now that they can rejoice in six of their children walking in the truth, who have given themselves up to the Lord Jesus! The Lord has been pleased graciously to bring them...one and all...to understand the Gospel....

"In generations that have gone by, my grandsire could say the same, and *his* sire could say the same of his house. We have been a race of those whom God has blessed. May it be your privilege also! ... 'For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are far off – even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.'" Acts 2:38f.

* * * * *

In a somewhat later and an even more ungodly age, Noah too "kept on walking with God." Noah had been reared by an apparently godly father – Lamech, the grandson of that Enoch who previously had himself "kept on walking with God." Consequently, the godly Noah similarly – and predictably – himself too "kept on walking with God."⁵¹

Thus, both before and during the great flood, Noah continued to instruct even his three married sons and their wives – at meetings of Christ's Church (even

⁵⁰ Vols. I-IV, London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1934, OT I pp. 35f & NT IV p. 5.

⁵¹ Gen. 5:21-31 & 6:8f.

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when inside the ark). Indeed, it seems Noah did so day by day – and certainly on the sabbath every week.⁵²

John Calvin commented⁵³ that Moses says Noah "had 'walked with God.'" Genesis 6:9. This was an excellency which Moses "had also commended, in the holy father Enoch, in the preceding chapter." Genesis 5:22 & 5:24.

In Genesis 6:10, continued Calvin, "Moses again mentions three sons" of Noah. Moses does so "for the purpose of showing that, in the greatest sorrow by which he [Noah] was almost consumed, he was yet able to have offspring – in order that God might have a small remnant of seed for Himself...."

"Peter teaches that Noah's deliverance from the universal deluge was a figure of baptism (First Peter 3:21).... Noah, believing the promise of God, gathered together himself [and] his wife and his children – in order that, under a certain appearance of death, he might emerge out of death...."

"It was a wonderful example of virtue," added Calvin,⁵⁴ "that...Noah alone had regard to the vengeance of God.... In the midst of the ruin of the whole world, he had no doubt that he would be saved...."

"It was a kind of regeneration, when Noah and his family emerged from the flood.... Nothing was done that was worthy of praise, except by faith...."

"Noah paid such respect to the Word of God.... The work of building the ark was long and laborious; [and] was hindered by the daily scoffings of unbelievers.... They insulted the holy man on every side.... Why was the ark the custodian of the safety of a single family – except in virtue of the fact that the wrath of God spared a righteous man [namely Noah together with his immediate family] from perishing with the ungodly?"

Abraham Kuyper⁵⁵ appropriately commented on Second Peter 2:5. He makes some very insightful observations about Preacher Noah and his covenant family.

"Over every child that is baptized," explained Kuyper, "the Church proclaims the memory of what God did in the terrible days of Noah. Then, [outside the ark] every son of man drowned and suffocated in the deep waters; and God's ark saved only eight souls, out of all who were alive."

⁵² Gen. 6:8-10,18f,22; 7:4-11,17,24; 8:4,6-12,15f,20-22; 9:1-9; Heb. 11:7; I Pet. 1:10-12; 3:20f; II Pet. 2:5. See too Lee: *Cov. Sab.* p. 72.

⁵³ *Comm.* on Gen. 6:9f & 7:17f.

⁵⁴ *Comm.* on Heb. 11:7.

⁵⁵ *Twelve Old Patriarchs*, Kampen: Kok, 1936 ed., pp. 34-38.

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"This connection between Noah and our baptism is no evidence of ingenuity. It is grounded in Scripture. The holy apostle Peter expressly testifies to us that what happened to Noah, concerns us too – and that the figure of this, baptism, conserves us in the same way as the waters of the great flood then upheld the ark." First Peter 3:19-21.

"Noah and his family," continued Kuyper, "finally stood alone. The rest of that generation had apostasized from God. Only Noah [and his family] still stood.... Noah believed; [and] escaped.... And he escaped perdition not just for himself alone, but together with his whole family.

"By this faith of his, Noah saved all humanity. If Noah had not believed and had thus not built the ark, our entire race would have perished – and even you would never have existed!"

* * * * *

In his *Treasury of the Old Testament*, Spurgeon preached what he called 'A Family Sermon' – on Genesis 7:1 & 7:7. Those texts state that "the Lord said to Noah, 'you and all your house[hold] must come into the ark!' ... So Noah went in – and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him – into the ark."

The Baptist Spurgeon himself then here insisted "that the Lord said [to Noah], 'you *and all your house[hold]* must come into the ark!' How good it is of the Lord to think of our children!

"That He should save us, oh, we must always bless Him for that! But that He should have a word for our wife, a word for our son, and a word for our daughter – this is overflowing mercy!"

Spurgeon continued: "When the Lord Jesus Christ takes to His heart the master or the mistress of a house, He is willing to take all the household. He came to the jailor's house at Philippi, and He looked on him with love. But He did not stay with him only. He blest all his household – so blest them that they were all brought to believe in the Lord, and they were all baptized there and then [Acts 16:31-34].

'You must come, and your house' [Genesis 7:1] – is it not? Am I reading it correctly? Look at the passage! Look at it! It is not merely: 'you must come; and your house!' We will read it again. 'The Lord said to Noah, you and *all* your house must come into the ark!' [Genesis 7:1 *cf.* First Peter 3:20-21 and Second Peter 2:5 & 3:6-9]. 'ALL'.... 'You and *all* your house must come into the ark'....

"My dear brother, when you are converted yourself, it is a blessing that you have so far a hold of the gospel. But go on to grasp more of it! 'What must I do to

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be saved?' said the jailor. And Paul replied, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house!' [Acts 16:30f]....

"There was a closed door between the family of Noah and all the rest of the world.... The regenerate pass straight away from communion with this world, to hold all their communion inside the ark – to have all their fellowship in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ....

"Who knows, when a man is born to God, but that there shall spring from him in future years a godly seed that shall become Ministers of Christ and Missionaries of the cross? It is a grand event when a family is saved....

We ought to feel joy when father, mother, sons and daughters enter the ark of Christ and find salvation there. Oh, if households enter into Christ – the very bells of heaven may ring again and again and again with a joy that hath many joys within it!

"Now let us go into details. The first fact is that *Noah went in*. This was right! Noah was the leader. The husband is the head of the household, or ought to be, and he should go to Christ first.... Noah goes in first, for he would obey the Lord.

"Head of the house, are you in the ark? Are you in Christ? You are a father; you have sons grown up around you – are you decided? You wish your family to grow up in the fear of God. I hope you do. But how can you expect it, if you are not saved yourself?

"If Noah had not gone into the ark, I should not expect to read that Shem and Ham and Japhet went in. O you that are heads of households! Your position is very responsible. You will have to bear much blame, if your children go astray....

"I hope, dear fathers and mothers, you will never agree to have *one* of your children lost. Make it your daily and nightly prayer, your incessant effort, your hourly desire, that not only Shem and Ham and Japhet may be brought, but their wives too – till not one shall be left behind, but the whole family shall be saved in Christ Jesus!"

* * * * *

Before and during the flood, every seven days Noah and all his family apparently kept the weekly sabbath. Genesis 7:4-10 & 8:6-12. After the flood, they all exited from the ark – and worshipped Jehovah at the family altar which that holy man then built. Genesis 8:18-21.

God's response to this would redound to the benefit of future mankind even 'from his youth' or infancy onward. Indeed, it would ceaselessly continue so to

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redound 'day and night' while the Earth remains – alias till the very end of World History. Genesis 8:21-22.

On this basis, the family covenant erected with Adam at his very creation (Genesis 1:26-28) – and with all of the original implications for regular household worship (Genesis 2:21-25 *cf.* 3:7-8 & 3:21 & 4:1-4 *etc.*) – was now re-enjoined to Noah; to his family; and also to all of their descendants 'for perpetual generations.' Indeed, this would so remain – for as long as the rainbow in the sky itself keeps on recurring. Genesis 9:1-13f *cf.* Revelation 4:3-11.

About Noah's post-flood family altar, Calvin commented:⁵⁶ "This passage teaches us that sacrifices were instituted from the beginning." *Cf.* Genesis 1:28 to 2:3 & 3:21 & 4:3-4 & 4:26 & 5:22f & 6:9 & 7:2 with 8:17-22. Hence Calvin continued: "When the holy fathers formerly professed their piety towards God by sacrifices, the use of them was by no means superfluous...."

"Noah had rested upon the Word of God.... He had rendered this worship in reliance on the divine command.... We have said before that one animal of every kind was preserved separately, and have stated for what end it was done [Genesis 7:2 & 8:20]. But it was useless to set apart animals for sacrifice – unless God had revealed this design to holy Noah...."

"Moses says that sacrifices were chosen from among clean animals [Genesis 8:20].... It is certain that Noah did not invent this distinction.... He undertook nothing without divine authority...."

"The smell of the sacrifice was acceptable to God.... All religious services which are not perfumed with the odour of faith, are of an ill-savour before God. Let us therefore know that the altar of Noah was founded in the Word of God." Thus John Calvin.

"Then God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the Earth!'" Genesis 9:1 *cf.* 9:7. About "those four men and their wives" Calvin commented further:⁵⁷ "The Lord prescribes to them their future condition of life...."

"He not only renews the World by the same Word by Which He before created it. But He directs His Word to men in order that they may recover the lawful use of marriage; may know that the care of producing offspring is pleasing to Himself; and may have confidence that a progeny shall spring from them...."

⁵⁶ *Comm.* on Gen. 8:20f.

⁵⁷ *Comm.* on Gen. 9:1,7.

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"He again turns His discourse to Noah and his sons, exhorting them to the propagation of offspring – as if He would say, 'You see that I am intent upon cherishing and preserving mankind. Do you therefore also attend to it!' Thus far John Calvin.

* * * * *

We summarize. The Divine Persons within the Triune God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – praised One Another within that Divine Family from all eternity. They did the same, day by day, also during the week that our created Earth was being formed.

So too did the unfallen angels. It certainly seems that also the later-created persons within the first human family, as images of God, held daily household worship together – and probably both morning and evening. Indeed, they seem to have done so on the day of their creation – and also thereafter (even in spite of the fall).

Thus, at least by implication: Luther, Calvin, the *Westminster Standards*, John Milton, John Owen, Alexander Smith Paterson, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Andrew Murray Jr., Abraham Kuyper Sr., and Herman Bavinck. Thus too – as we shall see in a later chapter – also the renowned commentator Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry.

Adam and his family, as a household, worshipped the Lord – apparently daily. Adam's descendant the godly Noah certainly did so. Indeed, Noah was a kind of 'second Adam' – as well as an example also to us.

Adam's household had worshipped God regularly, both before and after the fall. Abel and Seth and Enos had done the same. Enoch the Sethite 'walked with God.' So too did Noah, together with all his household.

The latter did so before and during and after the flood. They did so all the days they were together under the same roof. So too should we – even today.

II

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We have seen above that daily household worship antedated man's fall.⁵⁸ We saw that it was apparently held both morning and evening.⁵⁹

We also saw that weekly sabbath worship is similarly primordial.⁶⁰ Indeed, we saw that daily household worship and weekly sabbath worship both continued after the fall⁶¹ and even during the flood.⁶²

Noah held daily family worship and weekly sabbath worship with his children – Shem and Ham and Japheth – while rearing them before the flood. He did the same also later, at least for a long period even after they had reached maturity – namely while they and their wives were all being saved under the same roof of the ark during the flood.

Like a second Adam, Noah had even worshipped with them anew after the flood.⁶³ Consequently, even Noah's immediate descendants – the early Semites, Hamites and Japhethites – all practised daily family worship and weekly sabbath worship for at least some time after the flood.

It was especially among the early descendants of Shem that these various institutions were preserved best. For God, through Noah, blessed him and his tents (both domestic and ecclesiastic).

The prophet Noah also blessed Shem's brother Japheth, the father also of the Germanic peoples. He said:⁶⁴ "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem! ... God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.... The sons of Japheth: [the Celto-Brythonic] Gomer...and [the Grecian] Javan.... The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz [the Germans] and Riphath [the Swiss] and...the Isles" *etc.*

Significantly, it is especially in the Anglo-Saxon Protestant alias the Germanic household – that family worship later came into its own. That is the household

⁵⁸ Cf. Gen. 1:26f & 2:15f.

⁵⁹ Cf. 2:21-25 & 3:8f.

⁶⁰ Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Heb. 4:3-11; cf. Num. 28:3-10.

⁶¹ Gen. 4:3f,26 cf. 5:23f.

⁶² Cf. Gen. 7:4-11 & 8:6-12.

⁶³ Gen. 8:18f cf. 9:1-9f.

⁶⁴ Gen. 9:26 - 10:2.

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which the notorious communist Karl Marx later despised, when he sarcastically termed it: "the Christian-Germanic family."

After Noah blessed Japheth and his seed, Holy Scripture relates that "Noah lived 350 years.... And all the days of Noah were 950 years; and he died," after begetting "the generations of the sons of Noah."⁶⁵

* * * * *

Soon after the Noachic flood, however, true religion and daily family worship again began to suffer. This was so especially among the Hamites, who took the lead in man's increasing apostasy from God.⁶⁶ So, because of man's pride and ungodliness at the tower of Babel, God scattered mankind abroad, throughout the length and breadth of our great planet Earth.⁶⁷

Yet true religion did not perish utterly from the Earth. For, especially in the "tents of Shem" – from Job in the east⁶⁸ to Abraham in the west⁶⁹ – domestic household devotions continued among the truly pious. Significantly, this occurred over a wide area. Indeed, this took place long before the repromulgation of daily family worship to and through Moses.⁷⁰

As Dr. John Owen declared⁷¹ especially of postdiluvian family worship: "Prayer...is discharged by anyone in lesser or greater societies wherein, upon his words and expressions, do depend...their communion." This means that the communion or social intercourse even within lesser societies (like families) as such, and the communion or social intercourse also within greater societies (like clans) as such – including their group-communion with God in prayer – depends upon the community prayers of the heads of those societies.

These are prayers within those societies; with those societies; and for those societies. Such group-worship of the community concerned, is certainly what Owen rightly called "the duty" of those societies or social groupings as such – albeit led by one person or several persons for and on behalf of many other persons. For such group-worship led by one or several is necessary, "consequently, [for] their edification in the whole." See Genesis 9:26f; 14:18f; Exodus 2:16f; 18:5; 18:12; 18:17-21f.

⁶⁵ Gen. 9:28 - 10:1.

⁶⁶ Gen. 10:6-10 *cf.* 11:1f.

⁶⁷ Gen. 11:1-9.

⁶⁸ Gen. 9:26f; 10:21-24; 22:20-24; 26:28; *cf.* Job 1:5.

⁶⁹ Gen. 11:10-31; 12:1-3; 18:19.

⁷⁰ Deut. 6:6-9.

⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, IV pp. 301-3 & 313.

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Hence, continued Owen, "this is the will of God: that in assemblies of His appointment, as churches and families..., one should pray in the Name of Himself and [also on behalf of] the rest that join with him.... There is a spiritual ability given unto men by the Holy Ghost, whereby they are enabled to express the matter of prayer as taught and revealed in the manner before described." This is a spiritual ability, "in words fitted and suited to lead on [both] their own minds, and the minds of others, unto edification."

Owen then concluded: "Every man is to pray or call upon God, according as he is able.... This is implanted into the heart of mankind.... There are but few in the world, especially of those who are called Christians, but that at one time or other do so pray" – in accordance with "the dictates of nature and [the] light of Scripture." For worship is increated in the human heart.

There are also "duties to be performed by virtue of our general vocation. Such are the duties of parents and masters of families.... The families that call not on the Name of the Lord, are under His curse." Jeremiah 10:25.

Consequently, all families – and precisely as families – should indeed call upon God's Name in family prayer, and therefore at family worship, and even every day. Declares Owen: "This be their duty!"

* * * * *

Hence daily family worship of the true Jehovah, in those postdiluvian but pre-Mosaic ancient days, was by no means limited just to the Israelites. For there are traces of the same among the Abramites – before the days of Israel. Indeed, there are even stronger evidences of this also in the home of Job – who was roughly contemporaneous with Abr(a)ham.

This should not be surprising – regardless as to whether Job lived before or during or even after the time of Abraham. For Job apparently knew about the sabbath.⁷² He knew about Adam, and also about that first ancestor's unworshipful transgressions of the Commandments of God.⁷³

Job further knew how the good angels had praised the Lord – day by day – while God, during Earth's formation week, day by day prepared the World for Adam.⁷⁴ Indeed, Job apparently even knew about the subsequent days when the angels were worshipping God in Heaven⁷⁵ – perhaps corresponding to the very

⁷² Cf. Job 2:13 & 1:2-5.

⁷³ Job 26:13; 27:3; 31:33 cf. 31:1f & 33:4-6.

⁷⁴ Job 38:4-7.

⁷⁵ Job 1:6 & 2:1 cf. Ps. 103:19-22.

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days when Job, day by day in his own earthly home, himself worshipped that same God together with all his household.⁷⁶

The first rational creatures ever to sing praises to Jehovah were God's good angels. This was during the mornings of the days of our Earth's formation week, and probably even before some of the angels fell into sin.

That angelic praise occurred ere God created Adam and Eve, also with a view to their praising Him every day. Even in those pre-human times, great 'families' of angels and possibly also of stars then praised Jehovah.⁷⁷

Said God to Job:⁷⁸ "Where were you, when I laid down the foundations of the Earth...when the 'morning stars' sang together and all the 'sons of God' shouted for joy..., when I made the clouds...and said [to the Earth], 'Just so far but no further; here shall you proud waves be stayed!?' ... Have you commanded the morning, since your days, and caused the dawn to know its place – to grasp the ends of the Earth so that the wicked can be shaken out of it?"

To be sure, Job had not! Nor had even Adam, also before his fall. Yet the daily worship of Jehovah by the 'families' of angels, on the morning of the days of Earth's formation week (and also subsequently) – was designed further also to give encouragement even to the family of Adam, as well as to the family of Job, to do the same.⁷⁹

On the above passage, the great Lutheran theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Delitzsch commented:⁸⁰ "Then, no human being was present. For man was not yet created. The angels, however, beheld with rejoicing the founding of the place of the future human family....

"*B'ney Elohim* [or 'sons of God'] are, as in chapters one and two, the angels who proceeded from God by a mode of creation...likened to begetting – and who, with Him, form one *patria* [or 'family']." Compare Job 1:6f & 2:1f with Ephesians 3:15 & 1:10-21 and Colossians 1:16 & 2:10-15.

"The 'morning stars' are mentioned in connection with them," explained Delitzsch, "because between the stars and the angels...a mysterious connection exists.... *Kochav boqer* [compare the 'son of the morning'] is the morning star [*cf.* Isaiah 14:12].... It was just the dawn of the World, [then] coming into being....

⁷⁶ Job 1:5,13 & 2:7,13 *cf.* Matt. 6:9-11.

⁷⁷ Col. 1:16 & Eph. 3:15 & 6:12 *cf.* I Cor. 15:39-41 & Pss. 148:1-6 & 150:1,6 & 136:1-9.

⁷⁸ Job 38:4-13.

⁷⁹ See nn. 72f.

⁸⁰ *Biblical Commentary on Job*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968 ed., II pp. 313-16.

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The morning stars shone forth all together, at the founding of the Earth." This was intended to "symbolize one grandly harmonious song of joy."

Indeed, whether among angels or whether among men, evil is restrained by early morning family worship. Hence, continued Delitzsch, "the dawn of the morning, spreading out from one point, takes hold of the carpet of the Earth – as it were by the edges – and shakes off from it the evil-doers who had laid themselves to rest upon it the night before."

Just as the angels alias the 'sons' of God' sang during the days of Earth's formation – so too (most probably) did they sing on the later day when Adam and Eve were created and then themselves sang their own human song of praise.

So too, apparently, have the angels further sung and worshipped – every day since. As families of godly men have worshipped God each day on Earth – so too have 'families' of godly angels worshipped God each day in Heaven. Thus, even as Job and his sons were worshipping God right here on Earth (Job 1:4-5) – the angelic 'sons of God' were themselves worshipping God in Heaven (Job 1:6f). For God's Kingdom must come to fruition here on Earth, even as it does in Heaven – daily! Matthew 6:10-11.

* * * * *

Declares the Word of God: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job.... That man was perfect and upright, and one that respected God.... There were born to him seven sons.... His sons went and feasted in their homes, every one on his own day..., and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

"Now it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them – and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all....

"This Job did continually [or 'all the days']. Then was the day when 'the sons of God' came to present themselves before the Lord."⁸¹ Job 1:1-6.

The *Westminster Confession*⁸² cites Job 1:5 (with its references to "the days of their feasting" and "early in the morning" and "continually" alias "all the days"). It does this, where itself declaring the necessity of God being "worshipped everywhere...in private families daily" *etc.*

⁸¹ Job 1:1-6 & Matt. 6:10-11 compare *W.C.F.* 21:6 & Job 1:13,20-22 & 2:10-13 & 29:1-5 *cf.* 19:10-15.

⁸² *W.C.F.* 21:6.

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Thus, the Westminster theologians here suggest that even in the oriental land of ancient Uz – the godly Job "continually" (alias "all the days") held constant religious devotions (and indeed also "early in the morning"). Job did this for each of his own ten children not only on their birthdays ("when the days of their feasting were gone about"), but apparently also every day ("continually" or "all the days").

The purpose of those family devotions of Job, was to cover the possible excesses of his seven sons when they feasted "every one on his day." At the very least, this certainly refers to feasting on their birthday anniversaries. Very possibly, however, it may well also refer to feasting on each one of the seven days of every week.

Others, such as Professor Delitzsch, and Professor Bavinck's friend Rev. Dr. Renkema – believe that this expression "all the days" refers to Job's weekly family devotions. These would then have occurred on the seventh day of the week as the post-fall Old Testament Saturday sabbath – or alternatively on the subsequent or eighth day of the week, as a Sunday anticipation of the New Testament Lord's Day of Christ's resurrection. Compare Job 19:25f.

Again, yet others would combine the views of the Westminster theologians with those of Delitzsch and Renkema. Such believe that the expression "all the days" here means that Job held family devotions every day, plus a 'double portion' – on the sabbath – once a week.⁸³ The latter of these various interpretations is, we maintain, perhaps the most feasible.

However, each of these various interpretations overlaps with the others. Every one of them clearly establishes very regular household worship. Indeed, they all establish at least weekly (sabbath) worship, and probably also daily 'morning' (and evening?) family worship – in Job's own home. For as Job himself later declared some time after a calamity killed all of his children: "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me..., when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were around me!"⁸⁴

Thus Delitzsch here commented:⁸⁵ "The text, understood simply as it stands, speaks of a weekly round (Oehler and others). The seven sons took it in turn to dine with one another round the week... There existed among them a family peace and union, which had been cherished uninterruptedly. But early on the

⁸³ Cf. Job 1:13 & 42:8 with the texts referred to at nn. 131-34.

⁸⁴ Job 29:25.

⁸⁵ *Op. cit.*, I pp. 50-52.

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morning of every eighth day, Job instituted a solemn service for his family, and offered sacrifices for his ten children....

"The writer might have represented this celebration on the evening of every seventh day, but he avoids even the slightest reference to anything Israelitish.... Here the family celebration falls on the morning of the Sunday – a remarkable prelude to the New Testament celebration of Sunday....

"There were ten whole sacrifices offered by Job on each opening day of the weekly round [Sunday], at the dawn.... In Job's family, therefore, there was an earnest desire for sanctification.... This Job did every day, *i.e.*, continually. As head of the family, he faithfully discharged his priestly vocation, which permitted him to offer sacrifice."

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The great Calvinist theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck, in his 'Introduction' to his friend Rev. Dr. W.B. Renkema's famous and excellent work *The book of Job*, strongly recommended that commentary. Not unlike Delitzsch, Renkema himself made⁸⁶ the following observations on the above passage:

"The children of Job's family were united with one another in the heartiest way. In this respect, they may well be pointed to as a model for all children. Every day, the sons had a meal together: first, in the home of the one; next, in the home of the other. Inasmuch as there were seven [sons] – every one got his own turn, each week.

"Indeed, even the three daughters [of Job], who still lived with their [father and] mother, were not forgotten. They [the three daughters] too were invited to the meal, to eat and to drink together with their brothers.

"What a loving relationship! In this way, every day was a feast for the children of Job. Thus Job showed that he, as an understanding father, did not want to withhold a certain degree of independence from his adult children.

"Nevertheless, Job continually watched over his children. And whenever his children had been together...Job too called them together and sanctified them. He offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all – for the sons, as well as for the daughters.

"Job was thus not only the father but also the priest of his home. He brought sacrifices to the Lord to atone for the sins of his children.... For this reason, the

⁸⁶ *The Book of Job*, Leiden: Donner, 1899, pp. vii *seqq.* & 27f.

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happiness in Job's home must have been continual. He feared the Lord with his entire household. So he [rightly] kept on expecting the enduring blessing of Jehovah." Thus Renkema.

Declares God's Holy Word: "Whenever there were days of feasting" – alias whenever his "seven sons" feasted "every one his day" for "seven...days" – the patriarch Job "rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings" for each of his ten children. Job. 1:2-5. This he did "continually" or "all the days." Job 1:5b.

Indeed, apparently on one such day, there was also a somewhat similar 'daily' religious exercise in Heaven among the angels of the Lord. For, right after being told of Job's early morning household worship for his family "all the days" – the next verse declares that "then there was a day when the [angelic] sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah."

Once again, God's will was then being done each day here on Earth as it was in Heaven. Job. 1:5-6 *cf.* Matthew 6:10-11.

Here Delitzsch comments⁸⁷ that Jehovah now immediately "transfers us from Earth to Heaven where everything that is done on Earth has its unseen roots, its final cause." That day or 'the day' – or *hay-yom* (with its definite article *ha-*) in the Hebrew – 'the sons of God came...before Jehovah.' The great Hebraic grammarian Dr.Gesenius here explained⁸⁸ that "the article...refers to what precedes the day, at the time" of Job's early morning sacrifice (as mentioned in the immediately-previous verse Job 1:5).

Commented Dr. Delitzsch yet once again: "The article is used...here because the narrator, in thought, connects 'the day' with the following occurrence.... 'And it came to pass one day, when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother, that a messenger came to Job' [1:13f]....

"The article [*ha-*] of *hay-yom*...is immediately followed by an adverbial clause.... The details which follow, are important. Job had celebrated the usual weekly worship early in the morning with his children.... The messengers of misfortune began to break in upon him...therefore on the very day when, by reason of the sacrifice offered, he was quite sure of Jehovah's favour."

⁸⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 52 & 60.

⁸⁸ *Hebrew Grammar*, London: Bagster, pr. 109, re. 1c.

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These 'sons of God' (the angels) had previously sung morning praises to Jehovah during Earth's formation – when⁸⁹ "the morning stars" announced the arrival of each new day. Apparently, those same angels had then continued to praise the Lord each day ever since in Heaven – even while the sons of Adam did the same right here on Earth.⁹⁰ Day by day, both heavenly angels above and godly men on Earth would sing and pray to God. So they did this even on that day when also Job "rose up, early in the morning" – to pray for his family 'continually': alias "all the days."⁹¹

* * * * *

"Again, there was a day when the 'sons of God' came to present themselves before Jehovah."⁹² Apparently this too occurred, as on the above-mentioned earlier occasion, while Job was conducting household worship in his home. Since that earlier occasion, in a great personal calamity Job had indeed lost all of his children and all of his servants. Yet even thereafter, he and his wife no doubt still worshipped the Lord together, day by day. Compare James 5:11 with First Peter 3:7.

Then three of Job's friends subsequently came to him, in order to show him their sympathy. This took place at his home – and probably from one weekly sabbath to the next. For "they sat down with him upon the ground, seven days and seven nights; and nobody spoke a word."⁹³ Indeed, it seems that they then prayed with him – silently; every day; for seven days.

Perhaps months later,⁹⁴ his friends apparently left Job alone with God. However, when Job's friends then returned to his home with "seven bullocks and seven rams...to offer up...a burnt offering" – probably at yet another weekly household sabbath worship service – Job prayed for them. "Then the Lord 'turned the captivity' of Job, when he prayed for his friends.... Then all of his brothers and all of his sisters and all of his former acquaintances came to him, and ate bread with him in his house.

"Then Jehovah blessed Job's end more than his beginning.... And he had seven sons and three daughters.... In all the land there were not found women so fair as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers.... And Job lived after this a hundred and forty years, and saw his

⁸⁹ Job 38:4-13.

⁹⁰ Matt. 6:10-13 *cf.* nn. 89-91.

⁹¹ Job 1:5f,13f.

⁹² Job 2:1.

⁹³ Job 2:13.

⁹⁴ Job 29:2.

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children and his children's children to four generations. Then Job died" – surrounded by his descendants in his "nest"; and "full of days."⁹⁵

Job was well over a hundred and forty and perhaps as old as two hundred and forty when he died.⁹⁶ Certainly he had wished to "die" in his "nest" or home – and also to "multiply" his "days as the sand."⁹⁷ At any rate, he apparently died while surrounded by his descendants in his "nest" – and "full of days" of family worship too.

Just like the godly Gentile Job, we Christians too – even today – still need daily family worship. Job is a good model for us here – as also are: Adam; Seth; Enos; Enoch; Noah; and all the other patriarchs.

Thus the New Testament Epistle of James declares: "Take, my brethren, the prophets...as an example.... You have heard of the patience of Job."⁹⁸

* * * * *

At approximately the same period as the time of Job, one encounters also the prophet Abram (alias Abraham). This holy prophet Abraham was a well-known friend of God;⁹⁹ a blessed man;¹⁰⁰ a tither;¹⁰¹ and a model of daily Christian devotion¹⁰² and family worship.¹⁰³ Indeed, of him God declared:¹⁰⁴ "In you, all **families** of the Earth shall yet be blessed."

Hence the great Protestant Reformer John Calvin here commented:¹⁰⁵ "God promises to His servant Abraham that blessing which shall afterwards flow down to all people." See too the other extended comments on Abraham's family worship at Genesis 18:18f by Calvin, and also by Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry – in our chapters VI and IX below.

Abraham was the kind of man who prayed to God five times per day.¹⁰⁶ He erected his daily family altar just wherever he went. He circumcised all the males

⁹⁵ Job 42:8-17.

⁹⁶ Thus Job 42:16 LXX.

⁹⁷ Job 29:18.

⁹⁸ Jas. 5:10.

⁹⁹ I Chr. 20:7.

¹⁰⁰ Gen. 14:19.

¹⁰¹ Gen. 14:20.

¹⁰² Gal. 3:6-8,15f,27f.

¹⁰³ Gen. 18:19.

¹⁰⁴ Gen. 12:3 *cf.* Rom. 4:1-23.

¹⁰⁵ *Comm.* on Gen. 12:3.

¹⁰⁶ Gen. 18:23-33.

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in his household, including even its tenderest infants. Day by day, he then gave his entire household regular instruction.¹⁰⁷ Faithfully did Abraham "command his children and his household after him." As a result, they too would "keep 'the way of the Lord' to do justice and judgment."¹⁰⁸

Abraham was an Old Testament Christian, and the father of all true believers in Jesus Christ. Abraham trusted the great Triune Jehovah. For Abraham: heard the Father; foresaw Christ the Son; and lived in the Spirit. Every day he worshipped God – together with his household. May we too, as Abraham's children, do the same!¹⁰⁹

In his famous book *How to Raise Your Children for Christ*, South Africa's great theologian Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray Jr. has an excellent discussion of the statement in Genesis 18:19 that Abraham would 'command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment.' Explained Murray:¹¹⁰

"If Abraham was to be blessed and his seed with him, and all nations again in his seed, it was only thus – he must, as a faithful parent, pass on to others what he himself knew of God. It is only as the children become partakers of the parent's spirit, that they can share his blessing....

"The words of the text are most remarkable: 'I know (Abraham) – [so] that he will command his children and his home.' It was with this very purpose that God had chosen him, and revealed Himself. God Himself was the security that His Own purposes should be carried out. And so every believing parent has, in the very fact of his being taken into this relation with God, the guarantee that God will give the grace of faithfulness to prepare for the blessing, as well as the reward upon it."

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Through all of Abraham's daily family devotions, also his son Isaac learned to pray faithfully every day. The Lord blessed him too. Thus God promised Isaac: "I will be with you, and I will bless you. For to you and your seed...I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father....

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Gen. 11:27f; 12:3-8; 13:4; 14:14,19-22; 15:1f; 17:1-13,26f; 26:5.

¹⁰⁸ Gen. 18:18f cf. nn. 104-7.

¹⁰⁹ Gen. 12:3; 18:18f; John 8:56f; Gal. 3:14-17,27f.

¹¹⁰ Minneapolis: Bethany, 1975 ed., pp. 45f.

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"I will make your seed to multiply like the stars of Heaven.... In your seed shall all the nations of the Earth be blessed – because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws."¹¹¹

Abraham taught his household and his children to keep 'the way of the Lord.' Indeed, we too are to learn from godly men of old like these. For the New Testament Epistle of James still says to those who profess the Christian faith:¹¹² "Abraham our father was shown to be just...by offering his son Isaac upon the [family] altar.... Abraham trusted God...and he was called 'the friend of God'.... You have heard of the patience of Job.... Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray!"

Steeped in daily family worship while in his father Abraham's home, Isaac later met his wife – through prayer. Then, also after his father died, it seems that Isaac and his wife still kept on worshipping God from day to day.

Indeed, they apparently persisted in their daily family devotions even throughout the bitter barrenness of the first twenty years of their marriage. For "Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. Then the Lord was entreated by him – so that Rebekah, his wife, conceived."

The account continues: "Then she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord spoke to her."¹¹³ Hence, both Isaac and his wife prayed to God. See too First Peter 3:7.

When their children had been born, Isaac and Rebekah doubtless continued to worship Jehovah every day. For even when the family moved to Beersheba, they first of all constructed a new family altar. Indeed, they did so even before they set up their dwelling and started attending to the vital material needs of their daily lives.¹¹⁴

When Isaac's son Jacob later left home, his faithful father blessed him yet again.¹¹⁵ Jacob had been well-taught, ever since his conception when his parents had prayed for a child months before his birth.¹¹⁶ And now – Jacob himself communed with God, and promised to tithe to Him.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Gen. 26:3f.

¹¹² Jas. 2:22f.

¹¹³ Gen. 22:5; 23:3,12,26,37,42,48; 24:63-67; 25:11; 25:20-23,26; Jas. 5:11-13f.

¹¹⁴ Gen. 26:25 *cf.* 28:20.

¹¹⁵ Gen. 27:27f *cf.* 28:1-4.

¹¹⁶ Gen. 25:21-26.

¹¹⁷ Gen. 28:12-22.

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After himself marrying, even many years later Jacob still regularly worshipped the Lord – together with his household.¹¹⁸ He erected many family altars.¹¹⁹ Then Jacob "said to his household...: 'Let us arise, and go to Bethel and...make there an altar unto God!'"¹²⁰ Again, he did the same at Benoni;¹²¹ and later still even in Egypt.¹²²

Something very similar was done also by Joseph, Jacob's godliest son. Indeed, yet later, even Joseph's own grandchildren "were brought up – upon Joseph's knees."¹²³

* * * * *

We now come to the very important time of Moses and his Spirit-inspired legislation.¹²⁴ Moses' parents, the Levites Amram and Jochebed, probably practised daily family worship at home¹²⁵ – thus making quite an impression on their then still tiny children Aaron and Miriam and Moses.

When he had grown up, Moses himself certainly followed this same godly practice of household worship.¹²⁶ For "the Lord said to Moses...: 'You shall tell, in the ears of your son and of your grandson, the things that I have worked!'" Exodus 10:1-2.

Indeed, Moses testified about this even to Pharaoh. Furthermore, Moses encouraged also the Israelites to follow his own godly example. Thus he declared: "We will go with our young and old; with our sons and daughters... For we must hold a feast to the Lord." Exodus 10:9.

These important statements – Exodus 10:1-2 and 10:9 – are highly significant evidences that family worship was being practised even while the Israelites were still slaves in Egypt. This blessed practice is echoed very clearly in, as well as loudly re-enjoined by, the Mosaic Decalogue.

That is the Moral Law of God for all men of all races, and for all time. For the Ten Commandments were given through Moses, by the Lord, for all ages. There

¹¹⁸ Gen. 29:18-27f; 30:1-30; 31:11-38.

¹¹⁹ Gen. 31:43-55 & 33:20.

¹²⁰ Gen. 35:1-14.

¹²¹ Gen. 36:18-20.

¹²² Gen. 46:1f; 47:28f; 49:1f.

¹²³ Gen. 41:45-52; 48:15-21; 50:23.

¹²⁴ II Cor. 3:3-18.

¹²⁵ Ex. 6:13f,20,25f & 2:1-10 *cf.* Heb. 11:23.

¹²⁶ Ex. 2:1-9; 3:2; 4:16-27; 6:16-20; 10:1f; 18:1-12f *cf.* Heb. 11:23-26.

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in the Decalogue, the solidarity of parents with their children is seen very clearly – not only especially in religious worship, but also in the lack of it.

For through Moses, God in His Second Commandment declares He will punish the idolatrous "iniquity of the fathers upon the children – unto the third and fourth generation of those that hate" Him. Graciously, God also says He will show mercy to thousands of generations of those who love Him and keep His Commandments. Indeed, this clearly implies regular family devotions too.

In his chapter on 'The Second Commandment' of this Mosaic Decalogue, the great Calvinistic Ethicist Rev. Professor Dr. Willem Geesink rightly commented: "Both solitary and household religious exercises belong to private [alias to non-public] worship.... Two actions...are here to be remarked about: hearing God's Word, and prayer [including praise].

"In the first, God speaks to us; in the second, we to Him. Listening to God's Word must be an absorption, into our consciousness, of what God says – for the purpose for which He says this to us (*cf.* Second Timothy 3:16)....

"The prayer is to be an outpouring of what is in our consciousness, into the ear of our God – for the purpose that He hear us.... The 'Our Father' – compare 'give us this day our daily bread' – is an example for all our prayers.... Our theology rightly subsumes religious singing under prayers. This should be nothing other than 'sung prayers.' In the Psalms of Israel, one finds a few glorious examples of lyrical outpourings before God of that which is in our consciousness."¹²⁷

In the Fourth Commandment, God through Moses insists that sabbath-keeping each week must involve one's entire household: son, daughter and even servant. And in the Fifth Commandment – 'Honour your father and your mother!' – God through Moses implicitly requires parents to act honourably, and hence to hold regular family worship services. Indeed, all of this is somewhat echoed even in the *Westminster Standards*¹²⁸ of the godly British Puritans.

Hear too, on this, the Scottish Presbyterian theologian Rev. Alexander Smith Paterson – in his *Concise System of Theology on the Basis of the Shorter Catechism*.¹²⁹ Commenting on the Fifth Commandment ('Honour your father and your mother!'), Paterson observed:¹³⁰ "Both husband and wife are equally concerned in the religious instruction of the children of the family and of

¹²⁷ W. Geesink: *Reformed Ethics*, Kampen: Kok, 1931, I p. 278.

¹²⁸ E.g.: Ex. 20:4-12, cited in *W.C.F.* 21:1 & 21:7 and in *W.L.C. QQ. & AA.* 112-30.

¹²⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

¹³⁰ *Ib.*, p. 215.

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servants. For this, Abraham was highly commended by God. See Genesis 18:19" – and compare too 26:5 & 26:25 & 28:20 & 28:27f & 35:1f *etc.*

Commenting on the Fourth Commandment, Paterson further adds: "It is the duty of parents to see that their children observe the Sabbath day. 'In it thou shalt not do any work – thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter'....

"It is the duty of masters to see that their servants observe the Sabbath day." 'In it thou shalt not do any work...nor thy...[resident] manservant nor thy maidservant.' 'In it, thou shalt not do any work – thou, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates'.... It is the duty of heads of families to see that all within the gates of their house observe the Sabbath day....

"The Fourth Commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as He hath appointed in His Word." The the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, at Question and Answer 116. Obliquely, this includes all "holy convocations for religious worship": and hence also daily family devotions.

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Under the Mosaic laws, the lamps in the sanctuary were to be adjusted every morning and every evening. Also: two sacrifices of lambs were to be dedicated and placed in the sanctuary "upon the altar...day by day..., the one lamb...in the morning, and the other lamb...at evening....

"This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations.... And Aaron shall burn thereon [on the altar] sweet-scented incense every morning, when he adjusts the lamps.... And when Aaron lights up the lamps in the evening, he shall burn incense upon it [the altar], a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations,"¹³¹ every day of the week.

"And on the sabbath day, two lambs.... This is the burnt offering of every sabbath – beside the continual burnt offering."¹³²

Now just hear Keil and Delitzsch, in their famous *Commentary*, on those daily Israelitic sacrifices morning and evening! They claimed:¹³³ "The ordering of the light, from evening to morning, consisted...in placing the lamps upon the

¹³¹ Ex. 29:38-43; 30:7f; Lev. 24:2-4; Num. 28:3-8; I Chr. 16:40; Ezra 3:3; Pss. 3:5; 4:4-8; 5:3,7; 6:6-9; *etc.*

¹³² Num. 28:9f; Ezek. 31:13-18; 40:3f; 42:1f,10,17f; 46:4.

¹³³ C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch: *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Edinburgh: Clark, II pp. 192f & 207-9 and III pp. 216f *cf.* nn. 131-34.

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candlestick in the evening and lighting them – [so] that they might give light through[out] the night."

Next day – continued Keil and Delitzsch in respect of the lamps – there was to be a "cleaning [of] them in the morning..., filling them with fresh oil.... The daily morning and evening sacrifices were to be 'for a sweet savour, a firing unto Jehovah' (see at Leviticus 1:9). In these, Israel was to consecrate its life daily unto the Lord (see at Leviticus 1 and 2).

"In order that the whole of the daily life might be included, it was to be offered continually every morning and evening for all future time.... Aaron was to burn fragrant incense...every morning and evening before Jehovah, at the time when he trimmed the lamps....

"The connection between the incense-offering and the burnt-offering, is indicated by the rule that they were to be offered at the same time. Both offerings shadowed forth the devotion of Israel to its God. Whilst the fact that they were offered every day, exhibited this devotion as constant."

Forty years later, Keil and Delitzsch further explained, "when Israel was [being] prepared for the conquest of the promised land..., its relation to the Lord was regulated by a law which determined the sacrifices." Through those sacrifices, Israel "was to maintain its fellowship with its God from day to day, and to serve Him as His people." Numbers chapters 28 and 29.

"This order of sacrifice...was to form and sanctify the whole life of the congregation into a continuous worship.... The Law commences with the daily morning and evening burnt-offering ([Numbers 28] verses 3-8) – which was instituted at Sinai, at the dedication of the altar.... It is not merely for the sake of completeness that it is introduced here [at Numbers chapter 28]...; but also for an internal reason – *viz.* that the daily sacrifice was also to be offered on the Sabbaths....

"In the daily burnt-offering the congregation of Israel as a congregation of Jehovah was to sanctify its life – body, soul, and spirit – to the Lord its God.... On the Sabbaths, the daily sacrifice was doubled....

"The seventh day of the week, being a Sabbath, was distinguished above the other days of the week as a day that was sanctified to the Lord in a higher degree than the rest." This distinction was effected – as regards the Sabbath-offering – "by an enlarged burnt-offering, meat-offering, and drink-offering" – both morning and evening.

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Of course, this slaughter of lambs twice every day – pointed believers forward, even then, to rest upon or to 'fore-trust' in Christ's later and once-and-for-all sufficient sacrifice on Calvary. Hence, the constant twice-daily blood-sacrifices of those lambs all disappeared (for God's true people) – at their fulfilment in the death of Christ on Good Friday.

Yet the daily devotions of God's people – the constant morning and evening worship which accompanied the daily sacrifice of those lambs in Mosaic times – are still to continue. This is so, even after Calvary.

Thus, every morning, even today Christian families too are to 'clean their lamps' when they praise the Lord at household devotions. Indeed, also every evening they are to illuminate their homes – as they 'light up the lamp' of God's Holy Word for their families, at household worship.

Especially the daily morning and evening prayers – which in Mosaic times accompanied the now-fulfilled burning of the incense – are surely to continue morning and evening, day after day, till the very end of time. Just compare Exodus 27:20-21 & 30:1-7 with Revelation 8:3f. For even after Calvary – the New Testament book of Hebrews (3:7-13 & 10:22-25) clearly commands us to "exhort one another daily." It adds that "we have an altar" – namely the cross atop Calvary, sanctified for all time by our ever-living Lord Jesus Christ!

The Epistle to the Hebrews further declares: "In order that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, Jesus also suffered" once and for all. "By Him, therefore, let us keep on offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually [or 'all the days'] – that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.... Do not forget to commune" with one another. "For with such sacrifices, God is well pleased."¹³⁴

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Back in Mosaic times it was, of course, especially the Levitical priests who brought the daily sacrifices and who shared eating-portions of some of those offerings with their own families.¹³⁵ Yet even then, also the rest of the Israelites held their own devotions too – together with their families; inside of their own homes; especially during the Passover; and also at the week-long Feast of Tabernacles.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Heb. 13:12-16 *cf.* Job 1:5.

¹³⁵ Lev. 1:5 to 9:1f.

¹³⁶ Ex. 12:3-7,26f; 18:7; Lev. 23:5-8; 23:39-43; Neh. 8:8f.

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At the institution of the Passover feast in the homes of the Israelites, the uncircumcisable womenfolk could not manducate – and the boys did not do so before becoming mature men at puberty. Yet both the womenfolk and the boys nevertheless attended and benefitted from the instruction given there. Exodus 12:3f,21,26f,37,44f,48.

For the Passover blood was to be "a sign...on the houses" of the people of God (Exodus 12:13). It was to be observed in all their habitations (Exodus 12:20). Its blood was to be dabbed on the doorposts of each home (Exodus 12:21f) – for the protective benefit of the entire household, also including even its infants and small children (who did not eat of the lamb).

The non-communicating children present, were required to be catechised. "When your children shall say to you, 'What do you intend by this service?' – you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover!'" Exodus 12:26-27 and 13:5-10 compare Luke 2:41-47.

Something similar prevailed at the weekly Sabbaths and the annual Feasts of Israel. The weekly Sabbaths of the Israelites were to be celebrated in all of their dwellings. Leviticus 23:3. The same applied to the Feast of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:21); the Feast of Atonement (Leviticus 23:31); and the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34-43). Indeed, these are to be observed at all their dwellings and throughout their generations. Leviticus 23:14-21.

At the three great annual Feasts, only the adult males were required to present the family sacrifices of tithes and offerings in the central place of worship. Exodus 23:14-19 & 34:22-23. Yet most of the rest of the family too, including also the minor sons and the uncircumcisable daughters and maidservants, did share in and enjoy some of the portions of some of the sacrifices – in a non-sacramental way. Deuteronomy 12:5-18 & 16:3-17.

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Even more importantly: all of the Israelites were exhorted to conduct regular family devotions in their homes – and apparently every day. For Moses urged the people of God:

"Do not forget the things your eyes have seen...all the days of your life. But teach them to your children, and your children's children! ... The Lord said to me, 'I want to make them hear My words – so that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live on Earth, and so that they may teach their children.'"¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Deut. 4:8-10.

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Note, in the above paragraph, the expressions "Do not forget...all the days of your life" and "so that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live on Earth" *etc.* Fully twice, the term "all the days" (alias 'every day') is there used in rapid succession. As such, the above paragraph therefore clearly implies that God commands daily family worship.

Let us now listen to the Mosaic *locus classicus* on daily family worship. For there – through Moses – God Himself copiously commands His people. He does so in the following well-known words: "Hear then, Israel! Our God Jehovah is a unique Lord. So you must love the Lord your God – with all your heart; with all your soul; with all your might!

"These words, which I command you today, are to be in your heart! And you must teach them to your children, diligently! And you must talk about them – when you sit down in your home; and when you go down the road; and when you lie down; and when you rise up!

"And you must bind them as a sign in your hand! And they shall be like frontlets between your eyes. And you must write them on the doorposts of your home!"

Furthermore: "When your son asks you in time to come, and says: 'What is the meaning...of what the Lord our God commanded you?' – then you must tell your son...: 'The Lord redeemed us...and the Lord commanded us to keep all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our own good always, so that He might keep us alive even today!'"¹³⁸

Here, one should note especially the following seven points. First, "these words" – the Word of God, and especially His Holy Law – must be inscribed into the hearts of God's people, and be remembered by them.

Second, God's people must teach – literally, 'whet' or 'sharpen' – these words. Adults must convey these words into their own children. Indeed, they are to do so diligently.

Third, parents must also discuss the Word of God with their children. They are to do so early each morning ("when you rise up"); at mealtimes ("when you sit down in your home"); while travelling ("when you go down the road"); and last thing each evening ("when you lie down"). Specifically the phrase "when you lie down and when you rise up" has been taken by both Judaistic and Christian commentators to imply that the instruction should be given at least twice daily – *viz.* every morning and each evening.

¹³⁸Deut. 6:5-9,20-25.

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Fourth, parents are to teach their children from the various parts of the Bible. Indeed, in respect of this it is said: 'you must bind them as a sign in your hand.'

Fifth, the contents of the lesson must be seen and understood and remembered. It is to be as conspicuous as a headband (or 'like frontlets between your eyes').

Sixth, God's Word is, and His words are, to be written into the affairs of each household. 'You must write them on the doorposts of your home.'

Seventh, whenever children eagerly ask questions at such exciting family worship – those questions are to be answered patiently and clearly. For our own part, we ourselves do not hesitate to say that such questions should be answered even catechetically. This is indeed for the children's "own good, always" – so that God "might keep us alive even today."

It is very significant that the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession*¹³⁹ quotes the above Deuteronomic passage. It does so as proof that the great Jehovah "God is to be worshipped...in private families daily" – today too.

No wonder that also the great Lutheran theologians Keil and Delitzsch themselves here elucidated:¹⁴⁰ "For the love of God to be of the right kind, the Commandments of God must be laid to heart and be the constant subject of thought and conversation.... They were to be enforced upon the children; talked of at home and by the way[side]; in the evening on lying down; and in the morning on rising up – *i.e.*, everywhere and at all times.... The Israelites were to instruct their children and descendants as to the nature, meaning and object of the Commandments of the Lord."

* * * * *

Indeed, even also the rest of Deuteronomy implies that parents – at daily worship every morning and every evening – should constantly instruct their families. They should "teach" or "whet" or "sharpen" or "circumcise" their children's hearts. They should encourage them "to respect" and "to love" and "to serve" the Lord their God. They should explain to them that if they obey Jehovah, He will enable them to conquer His enemies – "and give you possession of nations greater and mightier than yourselves."

Parents should instruct their children from "this book" – the Holy Bible – about all "those things which are revealed." For thus the Word of God "shall not be forgotten from the mouths of their seed." Thus too, God's "men and women

¹³⁹ See *W.C.F.* 21:6.

¹⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, III pp. 324-26.

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and children...may hear and...learn and fear the Lord...and observe to do all the words of this Law."¹⁴¹

Hence, Deuteronomy ends with family-targeted worship. "Today you are all standing before the Lord your God – your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers; with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and your strangers that are in your camp.... Those things which have been revealed, belong to us and to our children for ever – so that we may do all the words of this Law....

"The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your children to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.... You shall read this Law before all Israel, in their hearing....

"Gather the people together – men and women and children, and your stranger which is within your gates – so that they may hear, and so that they may learn and fear the Lord your God and observe to do all the words of this Law; and so that their children who have not known anything may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God....

"Remember the days of old! Consider...many generations! Ask your father, and he will show you; [your] elders, and they will tell you....

"Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to observe to do: all the words of this Law!" Deuteronomy 29:10-29; 30:6; 31:11-13; 32:7,46.

The above provisions regarding family worship therefore continue even after Moses. His immediate successor, Joshua, clearly understood this.

For "the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying...: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from out of your mouth! But you shall meditate on it, day and night, so that you may observe to do according to all that has been written there! For then you shall make your way prosperous; and then you shall have good success!" Thus, "there was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua did not read before all the congregation of Israel together with the women and the little ones."

¹⁴¹ Deut. 10:11-16; 11:19-23f; 29:10f,21,29; 30:6,16; 31:12f.

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Indeed, Joshua also told God's people in public that he and his family would keep on worshipping God in private. This evidences constant household worship. For Joshua himself declared: "As for me and my house[hold] – we will keep on serving the Lord!"¹⁴²

* * * * *

Yet it is not just Moses and Joshua who practised family worship. As the author of the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews clearly states: "What more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson...who through faith subdued kingdoms." Hebrews 11:32f.

This Samson had been raised by godly parents who listened to the Word of God and who themselves communed with that Lord Who spoke to them. No wonder, then – in such a home – that Samson thrived.¹⁴³ For "the child grew up, and the Lord blessed him. Then the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times, in the camp of Dan."¹⁴⁴ Indeed, all of Samson's spiritual problems started only after he was removed from the blessings of such family worship!

It is further clear that also Elkanah and his wife Hannah maintained an atmosphere of constant family worship. They did so both before and after the conception and birth of their son, the prophet Samuel.¹⁴⁵ So Samuel too, from boyhood to maturity, did likewise¹⁴⁶ – and with ease.

The same is true also of the youngest son of Jesse – the great prophet and psalmist King David. He too grew up from conception, past birth, through puberty, and to youth – in a highly worshipful home environment.¹⁴⁷ When he later became king, David set a good example to his people: by himself worshipping God, morning and evening, every day.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Josh. 1:1,8; 8:35; 23:15.

¹⁴³ Judg. 13:2-9,12-23.

¹⁴⁴ Judg. 13:24f.

¹⁴⁵ I Sam. 1:3-7,10-27; 2:1-11,20f.

¹⁴⁶ I Sam. 2:11,18,26; 3:1-21; 7:3-17; 8:1-3.

¹⁴⁷ Pss. 22:9f; 71:3-6; 72:1,20; I Sam. 16:1-18; 20:29f; I Kgs. 9:4f.

¹⁴⁸ I Chr. 16:1,40; Pss. 3:5; 4:4-8; 5:3,7; 6:6-9; 42:8; 55:1,17; 77:5-7; 127:1-2f *cf.* 118:5,15 & 133:1f.

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As a prophet, David knew that all nations should – and one day would – pray to Jehovah.¹⁴⁹ As the 'family priest' of his own home, he also conducted daily domestic devotions for his household.¹⁵⁰ Thus the *Westminster Confession* (21:3) cites precisely David's Psalm 65:2 – to prove that "prayer with thanksgiving" is "part of religious worship"; and that this "is by God required of all men." For "all flesh" must come to Jehovah, as the One "Who hears prayer."

* * * * *

The Bible indeed tells us that David worshipped God in public. In addition, he worshipped Him also in private – together with his own family. Moreover, David encouraged others as well to do the same – in their own homes.¹⁵¹

For "David would not remove the ark of the Lord...[from] the house of Obed-edom.... And the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.... But as soon as David had finished sacrificing burnt offerings and peace offerings" before the tent (as the temporary ecclesiastical sanctuary) which he had pitched for the ark of the covenant – "he blessed the people in the Name of the Lord of hosts." Then he "returned to bless his household" at home.

Here, even before David blessed his own household, he first encouraged "the whole multitude" (of the people in the city of David) to go to their own homes and do the same. As citizens of the city where David himself resided, they doubtless knew about his own practice of regular household worship. So David here encouraged them as well – to go and do likewise.

Thus David "distributed among all the people..., to the women aswell as to the men, to every one a cake of bread.... So all the people departed, every one to his house. Then David returned to bless his household" too.

So, then, as the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (21:6) rightly concludes: "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily. Second Samuel 6:18,20."

As the conflated expositions of Henry\Gill\Pink on First Samuel and Second Samuel here point out: "In attending to his official duties, David did not overlook his domestic responsibilities.... God must be honoured by the head of the house,

¹⁴⁹ Ps. 65:2 & Isa. 23 *cf.* *W.C.F.* 21:3 (citing Ps. 65:2).

¹⁵⁰ II Sam. 7:8-15; 12:16-24; I Chr. 16:1,40-43; Ps. 118:15; 101:2; 127:1-3f; 128:3-6; 133:1f; I Kgs. 3:6f; I Chr. 29:1-5,19,23f; II Chr. 6:16; 7:1-4,12-18.

¹⁵¹ II Sam. 6:10-20.

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and the family altar maintained – no matter how much Satan may oppose the same."¹⁵²

Rightly did Alexander Fletcher state on Second Samuel 6:10-20 in his *Guide to Family Devotion*:¹⁵³ "David, after bringing the ark from the house of Obed-edom to the place prepared for it, returned at night and blessed his household – which was nothing else than engaging in the work of domestic worship. His own acknowledgement and resolution prove that he regularly maintained the observance of family religion."

Compare too, continued Fletcher, David's "Psalm 101:1-2 – 'I will sing of mercy and judgment. Unto You, O Lord, I will sing. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.'" Concerning King David, Rev. Alexander Fletcher then concluded: "Surely none will venture to assert that he could have done all this – without the regular discharge of the duty of domestic worship!"

* * * * *

David by no means confined his religious exercises to family worship. Also, whenever alone, he prayed to God on his own – every morning and every evening. Psalms 1:2; 4:1-8; 5:1-3; 55:17; 119:147f; 143:8.

In addition, David also appointed the sons of Korah as Musicians and the Levite Asaph as the Chief Recorder to praise the Lord God of Israel in His sanctuary. This they were to do "continually, as every day's work required."¹⁵⁴

To the Chief Musician, the Psalmist Korah wrote: "We have heard with our own ears, o God; our fathers have told us what work You did in their days, in the times of old." Psalm 44:1.

Even more significantly, God the Holy Ghost inspired also Asaph to compose a great 'family worship' passage. We refer, of course, especially to the first seven verses of Psalm 78. There, we read:

"Listen, O my people.... I want to utter deep sayings of old, which we have heard and got to know, and which our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and His strength and His wonderful works which He has done.

¹⁵²Henry, M.; Gill, J.; Pink, A.: *Exposition of I & II Samuel*, Florida: McDonald, n.d., p. 348.

¹⁵³London: George Virtue, n.d. p. xiv.

¹⁵⁴I Chr. 16:1f,37 cf. n. 148.

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"For He established a testimony...which He commanded our fathers, so that they should make them known to their children – so that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born. They will arise and declare them to their children, so that they might put their hope in God and not forget...but keep His Commandments."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon's comment on the above Psalm, in his own *Treasury of David*,¹⁵⁵ is rich indeed. "Truth endeared to us by its fond associations with godly parents and venerable friends," explained Spurgeon, "deserves of us our best exertions to preserve and propagate it. Our fathers told us, we heard them, and we know personally what they taught; it remains for us in our turn to hand it on.

"Blessed be God we have now the less mutable testimony of written revelation! But this by no means lessens our obligation to instruct our children in divine truth by word of mouth. Rather, with such a gracious help, we ought to teach them far more fully the things of God....

"The more of parental teaching, the better! Ministers and Sabbath-schoolteachers were never meant to be substitutes for mothers' tears and fathers' prayers....

"We will look forward to future generations, and endeavour to provide for their godly education... As we sow towards them, so shall we reap. Children are to be taught to magnify the Lord.... They ought to be well-informed as to His wonderful doings...and should be made to know 'His strength and His wonderful works that He hath done'....

"The first lesson for a child should be concerning his mother's God.... The world may teach secular knowledge alone.... The Church must not deal so with her offspring. She should look well to every Timothy, and see to it that from a child he knows the Holy Scriptures. Around the fire-side, fathers should repeat not only the Bible records, but the deeds of the martyrs and reformers – and moreover the dealings of the Lord with themselves, both in providence and grace....

¹⁵⁵McLean Va.: Macdonald Pub. Co., I-III, rep., n.d., III pp. 331f.

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"We would fain see...children taught cheerfully by word of mouth by their own mothers and fathers.... If you have children – mind you do not fail in this duty! ... We have the command for this oral transmission very frequently given in the Pentateuch, and it may suffice to quote one instance from Deuteronomy 6:7 – 'And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way[side], and when you lie down, and when you rise up!' Reader, if you are a parent – have you conscientiously discharged this duty?"

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In Psalm 101:1-2, David declares: "I will behave myself wisely, in a perfect way. O, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart!" On this text, Spurgeon made the following remarks, in his *Treasury of the Old Testament*:

"I am sure, if you are a father, and you wish to see your children trained up in the fear of God – you have a task before you that might tax the wisdom of a Solomon.... The Christian man at home should be scrupulous in all departments within his house.... The *man* is, what he is *at home*....

"If a man does not make his family happy, and if his example be not that of holiness in the domestic circle, he may make what pretension of godliness he likes. But his religion is base; worthless; mischievous.... It is at home that the want of true religion will do most damage....

"Round the hearth, if anywhere, holiness ought to be conspicuous. For there holiness is most beautiful; most useful; and most productive.... Every man's house is his castle; and if, inside his own castle, he does not walk before God – then he stands condemned.... The things that I have talked of, seem to be very homely. But indeed, they are most important....

"The greatest power in the World, next to the Ministry of the Word, is (by the power of the Holy Ghost) the holy living of Christian families. Let us plant in this dark world garrisons of holy men and women with their children about them – and this will be a means whereby the World shall be conquered for Christ....

O, fathers and mothers! If you are not converted early, you will live to regret – if God does save you at all – that you saw your youngsters grow up till they got beyond your influence, and they grew up unsaved!"

In Psalm 118:15, David declares – "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous." On this, Spurgeon remarks in his *Treasury of David*: "The families of believers are happy, and they should take pains to give

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their happiness a voice – by their family devotion.... Let none of us be silent in our households! If we have salvation, let us have joy; and if we have joy, let us give it a tongue wherewith it may magnify the Lord!"

In Psalm 128:1-4, David declares of the God-fearing man: "your wife shall be like a fruitful vine by the sides of your house; your children like olive-plants round about your table. Look, thus shall the man who fears the Lord be blessed.... Yes, you shall see your children's children – and peace!"

In his *Treasury of David*, Spurgeon commented: "Men live their young lives over again, in their grandchildren. Does not Solomon say [in Proverbs 17:6] that 'children's children are the crown of old men'? So they are!"

"The good man is glad that a pious stock is likely to be continued. He rejoices in the belief that other homes as happy as his own will be built up – wherein altars to the glory of God shall smoke with the morning and evening sacrifice.

"This promise implies long life; and that life rendered happy by its being continued in our offspring. It is one token of the immortality of man – that he derives joy from extending his life in the lives of his descendants."

In Psalm 145:2-4, David promises God: "**Every day** will I bless You, and I will praise Your Name for ever and ever.... **One generation** shall praise Your works **to another.**"

As Charles Haddon Spurgeon here commented in his *Treasury of David*: "We should see abundant cause in each day for rendering special blessing unto the Lord. All before the day; all in the day; all following the day – should constrain us to magnify our God every day, all the year round.... Men shall...make it a point to instruct their descendants in this hallowed exercise.... Let us see to it that we praise God before our children! ... The generations shall herein unite."

Also Psalm 148:12f is very relevant. There, God enjoins: "Both young men and maidens; old men and children – let them praise the Name of the Lord!"

Here Rev. Spurgeon commented in his above-mentioned work: "Both sexes and all ages are summoned to the blessed service of song.... Those who make up the ends of families, that is to say the elders and the juveniles, should make the Lord their one and only end. Old men should by their experience teach children to praise; and children by their cheerfulness should excite old men to song."

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In other Psalms, we read: about queens training their princes; about rising for worship before dawn, and meditating on the Word of God at night; and about the

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Lord building up the household of the godly every day. In this way, David also taught his son – the future King Solomon.¹⁵⁶

Solomon himself later acknowledged how he had learned to worship God while growing up in the environment of David's domestic devotions.¹⁵⁷ Then, in turn, Solomon too would later teach his own child – as seen in the book of "the proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel."

Those proverbs, explains Solomon, were intended and expected "to give...to the young man knowledge and discretion.... 'My son, listen to the instruction of your father and do not forsake the law of your mother!' ... My son..., receive my words, and hide my commandments with yourself!"

Solomon continues: "My son, do not forget my law! ... My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord! ... For the Lord corrects the one He loves – just like a father [corrects] the son in whom he delights.... The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but He keeps on blessing the habitation of the just....

"Listen, you children, to the instruction of a father! ... For I give you good doctrine. Do not forsake my law! For I was my father's son, tender and only-beloved in my mother's eyes. He also taught me, and said to me, 'Let your heart retain my words; keep my commandments, and live! ... Listen, my son, and receive my sayings!'"¹⁵⁸

The child has the duty of obeying the godly instruction of the parents. Enjoins Solomon: "My son, keep your father's commandment; and do not forsake the law of your mother! Bind them continually upon your heart!"

Solomon continues: "When you go forth, it shall lead you. When you go to sleep, it shall guard you; and when you wake up, it shall talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Proverbs 6:20-23.

In Proverbs 8:1f & 8:22-31, Solomon stresses that the Divine Wisdom or Word – Who later became incarnate in Jesus Christ – was "**daily**" the delight of the Lord during the formation week of our Earth. Compare also, Genesis 1:3,6,9,14,20,22,24,26,28.

This set an example for, and later to, God's image – man. Thus, soon after the statement of God the Holy Spirit in Proverbs 8:30 that the Divine Wisdom was

¹⁵⁶ See Pss. 45:15f & 119:4-9,99 and the superscriptions at Pss. 72:1 & 127:1f.

¹⁵⁷ I Kgs. 3:6-14; 9:2f; I Chr. 29:1-5,19,23f; II Chr. 6:16; 7:1-4,12-18; Prov. 1:1; 3:33f.

¹⁵⁸ Prov. 1:1-8f; 2:1f; 3:1f,11f,33f; 4:1-4,10.

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the "**daily** delight" of the Lord and Father during the formation week of our planet Earth – Solomon has the Divine Wisdom also say: "Blessed is the man that keeps on listening to Me, watching **daily**!" Proverbs 8:34.

The implications of this for daily human worship, and indeed also for daily family worship (as the creaturely reflection of praise within the Triune God Himself), should be obvious.

Indeed: "A wise son heeds his father's instruction.... A fool despises his father's instruction. But he who pays regard to reproof, is prudent." Proverbs 13:1a and 15:5.

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To avoid thorns and snares, explains King Solomon, one must "keep on guarding his own soul." This 'guarding' needs to start early in life – and the sooner the better. Proverbs 22:5. Accordingly: "Keep on training [or 'catechising'] a child in the way he should keep on going! Then, when he reaches maturity, he will not utterly turn away from it."¹⁵⁹ Proverbs 22:6.

The word here translated "keep on training" is elsewhere used to mean "dedicate" – whether so to dedicate a new home (Deuteronomy 20:5) or a new temple (First Kings 8:63). It is the word *chanoch* – from which also the proper noun 'Enoch' (in Genesis 5:18f) seems to have been derived.

The verb thus seems to refer to inauguration or initiation for a definite use – whether it is used in respect of a building, or of a child. Indeed, once thus sanctified, that use is thereafter to continue indefinitely. It is significant that this was indeed the case in respect of Enoch. For he then indefinitely continued 'walking with God.'

Here in Proverbs 22:6, this 'dedicating' or 'catechizing' or 'training up' of a child seems to be the instructional bridge which keeps on being built. That bridge is built especially during regular sessions of daily family worship.

It is the bridge particularly between the initiatory sacrament of circumcision for holy infants (*cf.* baptism) – and the frequentative sacrament of the Holy Passover exclusively for adolescents and adults (*cf.* the Lord's Supper). As the verb *chanoch* itself clearly implies, this bridge is especially that of catechetical instruction.

¹⁵⁹ Prov. 22:6. *Chanoch la-na'ar 'al-kiy darko. Gam kiy-yazqiyn lo,-yasoor mimmennah.*

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For here, it seems apparent that Solomon is encouraging his own married adult son to give catechism lessons (each day?) to the latter's own lad. Thus, Solomon wants his own grandchild regularly to be instructed in the way he should go: so that he would not depart from it in teenage (when 'bearded'). Indeed, this is the way that Solomon had trained his son in the past – even as David in turn had trained Solomon yet earlier.

The Hebrew verb here used by Solomon – the verb *chanoch* – therefore has the meaning: 'to train to walk in the ways of the Lord.' It indeed reminds us of the similar way in which the Sethite Enoch, alias *Chanoch*, had also been trained to 'keep on walking with God' – and indeed precisely "by faith." Compare Genesis 5:19-24 with Hebrews 11:5-6.

For Solomon's Hebrew verb *chanoch*, the third-century-B.C. Septuagint translation at Proverbs 22:6 has *engkainismos* (alias 'renewal'). The King James Version, in its margin, here has: 'catechise.'

The Hebrew word here translated "when he is old" comes from the noun *zaqen* – meaning 'a beard.' Suggesting the attainment of adolescence (when the beard first begins to grow), it further implies the prior giving of regular religious instruction to children even at a much earlier age. That in turn suggests *inter alia* also frequent family worship in the home.

Accordingly, the meaning of this important verse seems to be: 'Regularly catechize a child! ... Then he will not depart from that way, when he becomes a teenager' – namely once his beard starts to grow.

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The process of 'catechizing' even covenant children, however, still requires their constant correction. For even the seed of the godly have inherited the sinful tendencies of the fallen Adamic nature.

However, although "foolishness" alias moral depravity "is bound up in the heart of a child" – even when very young – "the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." So therefore: "Do not withhold correction from the child! For even if you beat him with the rod, he shall not die. By your beating him with the rod, you will deliver his soul from hell."¹⁶⁰

Under the ministration of the Word of God, there is a constant correction of all the participants – during daily devotions in the godly family. Yet precisely then, there is also even more important and exciting encouragement.

¹⁶⁰Prov. 23:13-15.

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State the Proverbs:¹⁶¹ "My son! If your heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice.... Listen, my son! ... Guide your heart! ... Listen to your father who begot you; do not despise your mother when she gets old!"

Solomon continues: "The father of the righteous shall rejoice greatly. The one who begets a wise child, shall rejoice because of him. Your father and your mother shall be glad; yes, she who bare you shall rejoice. My son, give me your heart!"

Solomon also seems to have collected – and Hezekiah, later still, seems to have re-copied – "the words of King Lemuel...which his mother taught him." She raised him with wise instructions – about what a king should and should not do. She further instructed him about the ideal woman – one who gets up while it is yet dark, and gives food to the members of her household and clothes them all. Consequently, even her children bless her – and her godly husband praises her even in public.¹⁶²

Finally, Solomon – or perhaps some other and yet-later descendant of David – urged his son to be wise throughout his life. Thus Ecclesiastes enjoins: "Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your life" – and "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the bad years come...when you shall say: 'I have no pleasure in them!'"

So then, "my son, be admonished by these things! There is no end of making many books; and much study wearies the body.... Fear God, and keep His Commandments! For this is man's whole duty. Because God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether good or evil."¹⁶³

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Even after the successful rebellion of the ungodly northern kingdom of Israel and its secession from the godlier southern kingdom of Judah – Solomon's descendant good King Jehoshaphat enjoyed God's blessing. For "the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first way of his [earlier fore]father David, and did not seek after idols. But he sought after the Lord God of his father, and walked in His Commandments."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Prov. 22:15,19,22,26.

¹⁶² Prov. 25:1 *cf.* 31:1-4,15,21,30.

¹⁶³ Eccl. 1:1,12; 12:1,12f.

¹⁶⁴ II Chr. 17:3f.

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At that very time, the faithful prophet Elijah bravely lived in the wicked northern kingdom. Yet he nevertheless went around proclaiming God's Word – and prayerfully teaching the teachable to practise private family worship.

As the New Testament Epistle of James informs us¹⁶⁵ about Elijah and other men of daily prayer: "This is pure and undefiled religion before God the Father: to keep on visiting the orphans and widows.... Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders..., and let them pray over him!"

Yes, adds James, even "Elijah was a man...like us.... He prayed earnestly that it might not rain. So it did not rain in the land – for three years and six months. Then he prayed again – and the sky gave rain; and the land brought forth its fruits."

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King Amaziah and Queen Jecoliah of Judah raised their son Uzziah in the way "that was right in the sight of the Lord.... Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem.... And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah did."¹⁶⁶

It was in the year of Uzziah's death that God called Isaiah the son of Amoz to be a prophet.¹⁶⁷ Isaiah seems to have grown up entirely used to daily devotions. Indeed, he looked forward to the final triumph of the Christian family everywhere on Earth.

"O Lord," he prayed for his people, "be gracious to us! We have waited for You.... Be their arm, every morning! ... For the Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our Lawgiver; the Lord is our King. He will save us!"¹⁶⁸

That same Isaiah (38:1) enjoined careless King Hezekiah: "Set your house in order!" Yet, apparently, he did not. So Isaiah (39:6f) then told him: The Babylonians "shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you." May we, today, then set our houses in order timeously and re-erect our daily family altar – lest a similar fate overtakes our descendants too!

Yet God is magnificently merciful. Indeed, He reconstructs even dilapidated family altars. Explains Isaiah:¹⁶⁹ "This is what the Lord says Who made you;

¹⁶⁵ Jas. 1:27; 5:17f.

¹⁶⁶ II Chr. 25:2f; 26:3f.

¹⁶⁷ Isa. 1:1; 6:1f.

¹⁶⁸ Isa. 33:2,22.

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Who formed you from the womb; Who will help you: 'Do not fear, Jacob My servant! ... For I will pour water upon him who is thirsty....

"I will pour My Spirit upon your seed, and My blessing upon your offspring. And they shall spring up...like willow-trees by the water-courses. One shall say. 'I am the Lord's!' And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob. And another shall subscribe his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

The implications of the above for family worship, are obvious. Indeed – according to the Septuagint – God also declared through Isaiah (46:3f) that "all of the house of Israel which are borne by Me from the belly, are carried from the womb and instructed from your childhood even to old age."

God assured Isaiah¹⁷⁰ that a loving mother would sooner forget her unweaned baby – than that Jehovah would ever forget the Zion of His Church. All of her children would yet be taught by the Lord; and great shall be her children's peace. Indeed, men would everywhere yet learn to fear the Lord – from the east to the west.

For the Lord gives great assurances to His Church. "My Spirit Who is upon you, and My words which I have put into your mouth – shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your seed, nor from the mouth of your seed's seed," says the Lord, "from now on, and for ever!"

God would finish renewing the world, through the post-millennial actions of a Spirit-filled Christianity. Infant mortality will then become a rarity.

In the 'New Jerusalem' of the Church milito-triumphant, "the child shall die a hundred years old.... For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." Then, promises Jehovah, "from one sabbath to another – all flesh shall come to worship before Me!"¹⁷¹

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Yet in the immediate future, things would first go from bad to worse. Thus the inspired prophet Jeremiah notes¹⁷² the idolatry of some families even in Jerusalem, and curses the ungodly for not holding family worship.

¹⁶⁹ Isa. 44:2-5.

¹⁷⁰ Isa. 49:15; 54:13; 59:20f.

¹⁷¹ Isa. 65:19-23; 66:23.

¹⁷² Jer. 7:17f *cf.* 9:13-15 & 10:24f.

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God first warned Jeremiah himself. "Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough – to make cakes to the queen of heaven and other gods, so that they may provoke Me to anger!"

Jeremiah soon responded. "O Lord," he bewailed, "pour out Your fury upon the heathen who do not acknowledge You!" Yes, "pour out Your fury...upon the families that do not call upon Your Name!"

Significantly, this latter statement by Jeremiah is referred to also in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Indeed, it is cited there to prove that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily."¹⁷³

Yet Jeremiah also predicted that godly Christian families will not, like the heathen, neglect such worship of Jehovah. For, referring to then-future New Testament times, God promises through His prophet Jeremiah:

"I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.... For they shall all know Me – from the least of them, to the greatest of them."¹⁷⁴

Yes, God's "compassions do not fail. They are new, every morning." For every morning and each evening, God's people pray with one another: "The Lord is my portion.... Therefore I will hope in Him. The Lord is good to those that wait for Him.... It is good that man should both hope and quietly wait for the Lord's salvation...when he bears the yoke in his youth."¹⁷⁵

Through Ezekiel, God negatively condemns even covenant parents who idolatrously mistreat or who religiously neglect their own children.¹⁷⁶ He also condemns even covenant children who keep on walking in the irreligious ways of their fathers – instead of walking in the ways of the Lord.¹⁷⁷

Yet also through Ezekiel, positively, God promises to dwell "in the midst of the children" of the Lord Jesus Christ – from Easter Sunday onward. "On the eighth day and so forward...I will accept you" – says the Lord.¹⁷⁸

As Paterson here observed:¹⁷⁹ "The Christian Sabbath was prophesied of, under the Old Testament dispensation. See Psalm 118:22 &c., compared with

¹⁷³ *W.C.F.* 21:6.

¹⁷⁴ Jer. 31:34.

¹⁷⁵ Lam. 3:22-27.

¹⁷⁶ Ezek. 16:20f.

¹⁷⁷ Ezek. 20:18-21.

¹⁷⁸ Ezek. 43:2,7,18,27 *cf.* 44:7-9,25,30; 46:1-6 and Lev. 6:14-18 & 10:14f and Num. 18:17f.

¹⁷⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 203 & 197 & 215.

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Acts 4:10 &c. See also Ezekiel 43:27, where the eighth day is mentioned as the day on which spiritual sacrifices were to be offered up to the Lord...after the abolition of the Jewish system of ceremonies 'when these days are expired'....

"It was to continue till the end of the world – which is expressed by the words 'and so forward'.... It is the duty of parents to see that their children observe the Sabbath day....

"It is the duty of heads of families to see that all within the gates of their house observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy.... Both husband and wife are equally concerned in the religious instruction of the children of the family." Thus Rev. A.S. Paterson, in his *Theology of the Shorter Catechism*.

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The prophet Joel is very important for family worship. Joel knew that those who were then old men, had (when themselves young) previously been taught about holy events by their fathers. Now that they themselves had become 'old men' (alias mature adults), Joel says they in turn should tell their children about those same events.

Indeed, those children should themselves tell their children. And those latter children should later themselves tell their own children, *etc.*

All of those various sets of fathers should tell all of those various sets of children about the same holy events which occurred before the time of the first-mentioned 'old men.' And they should also tell them about all new holy events which had occurred subsequently, or were only then occurring.

Joel's prophecy records¹⁸⁰ God's message to His people. It includes the following: "Listen to this, you old men! And listen, all you inhabitants of the land! Had it been like this in your own days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it! And let your children tell their children; and [let] their children [tell] another generation!"

Children were to be taught God's Word; regularly; at an early age – both then in Joel's time, as well as later in New Testament times. Thus Joel next orders: "Gather the people, sanctify the congregation: assemble the elders; gather the children; and even those who are unweaned babies!"

¹⁸⁰ Joel 1:3 & 2:16f.

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Joel continues:¹⁸¹ "Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord you God! For He has given you the former rain moderately" (in Joel's own day). "And He will cause the rain – both the early rain and the late rain – to come down for you simultaneously" (namely on the New Testament Pentecost Sunday).

Thus, "it shall come to pass afterward" – namely in the 'last days' of the Old Testament period and at the beginning of New Testament times – "that I will pour My Spirit out upon all flesh. Consequently, then: your sons and your daughters shall forthtell; your old men shall dream dreams; [and] your young men shall see visions" *etc.*

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Especially the book of Zechariah proclaims the advent of New Testament curses on the households of the ungodly. For God would cause His curse to "enter into the house[hold] of the thief, and into the house[hold] of him that swears falsely.... And it shall remain in the midst of his house[hold], and shall consume it." Zechariah 5:3f.

Zechariah (8:4-7) also predicts the advent of New Testament blessings on the families of worshipful Christians. It portrays old people attaining a great age, and the streets being full of boys and girls playing joyfully.

That would be marvellous in the sight both of the Lord and of His Church. Then He would save His people, both believing adults and their children – from both the east and the west.

It is of the New Testament Church that Zechariah predicted¹⁸² God would "pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplications" – namely on Pentecost Sunday. For just prior to that, on and after Good Friday, Christ's elect people would "look upon Me Whom they have pierced." Indeed, they would then mourn for Him – like somebody mourns for his only son....

"In that day, there shall be a great mourning.... The land shall mourn, every family apart – the family of the house of David...apart; the family of the house of Nathan...apart; the family of the house of Levi...apart; the family of Shimei...apart; all the families that remain, every family apart."

Thus, every covenant family would worship apart – separately, in its own home. Those predicted family worship services, as distinct from church or

¹⁸¹ Joel 2:23-28 *cf.* Acts 2:14f,38f and Lev. 23:4-21 *cf.* n. 180.

¹⁸² Zech. 12:10-14 *cf.* John 19:34.

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congregational worship services, would include family worship services also in the homes of Ministers of the Word for their own families – in addition to their regular ministrations for their congregations as such.

The great Baptist Preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon provided beautiful insights into the above passage. In his first sermon on Zechariah 12:10f within his *Treasury of the Old Testament*, Spurgeon preached:

"The text speaks of a family mourning. It will be a very blessed day indeed when we see this – when the Spirit of grace and supplication shall largely be poured out, and the land shall mourn, every family apart. Have you ever seen this in your households? Where the Spirit of God really rests upon a family, there will be much of it....

"We ought to grieve to think that there has been such formality and coldness in family devotion, so little love to Jesus manifested in the morning and evening worship. I fear that there are professing families where daily prayer is altogether neglected.

"The individuals, I trust, pray in their chambers. But they have given up the assembling of themselves as families in the Name of Jesus. As families, they are prayerless, and dishonour the Lord. Herein is serious cause for sorrow, because our Lord loses by this neglect that which He delights in – namely, family praises....

"I would to God that families did sometimes come together to pay their vows with special care, and that the father would confess family faults and family sins in the name of them all, and so acknowledge each wound given to the Lord in that house.... I would have a common confession from all, uttered by the voice of the head of the household.

"O, Lord Jesus Christ! How blessed it is to think that Thou art the God of all the families of Israel, and that Thou lovest the tents of Jacob well! Grant that our households, as households – inasmuch as they sin and transgress – may also walk before Thee in all humbleness! Let all families mourn! ... For alas! There are sins in Ministers' families which greatly provoke the Lord our God.... Let these also draw near to God, in penitential grief! ... It will be a grand thing for England, when we shall see more family piety and family mourning for sin.

"They tell us that in Cromwell's day, if you went down Cheapside at a certain hour in the morning, every blind of every house was down – because the inmates were at family prayer. It was then a standing ordinance of all professors of religion.... The idea that prayer is more acceptable in the parish church than in your own houses, is a superstition – and ought to be treated with no respect!

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"If we will pray in our families, and make every house into a church, and consecrate every room by private supplication – we shall not be fascinated by the foolish idea of the holiness of places or priests, and we shall so be guarded against the seductions of Popery. The Lord pour out the Spirit of grace upon all the families of His people!"

* * * * *

The last prophet of the Old Testament, Malachi, reminds God's people that "a son honours his father." Malachi 1:6. Indeed, from sunrise to sunset, God's Name would one day be magnified by the regular offerings and the incense-like prayers of converted Gentile families. As the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (21:6) insists: "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily. Malachi 1:11" *etc.*

The first book of the Old Testament contains the amazing predictions that the Seed of the saved woman would crush the serpent and its seed. Hence, in Him, "all **families** of the Earth shall yet be blessed." Genesis 3:15; 4:26; 5:22f; 6:8-18; 7:1-5; 8:6-12; 8:18-22; 9:1-13; 9:26f; 12:3.

In the latter text – Genesis 12:3 – the famous Reformer John Calvin observed how "God promises...that blessing...shall afterwards flow down to all people." The implication of this for family worship, is obvious.

At the end of the Old Testament, God states "a son honours his father." He then asks backslidden Israel: "If then I be a Father, where is My honour?" Yet, predicting the New Testament Church, God then also said: "From the rising of the sun even unto its going down My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name!" Malachi 1:6-11.

This prediction presupposes not only prevailing prayer to God, like rising incense. It further presupposes universal and therefore also family worship. Indeed, such worship would occur every day – *viz.* at or from sunrise, and at or until sunset.

Also according to Malachi (2:14f), monogamy and marital faithfulness would yet triumph everywhere – so that God "might seek a godly seed." For the widow and the orphan would yet be cared for – when Christ the Sun of righteousness would arise with healing in His wings.

The Lord goes on (Malachi 3:5) – "I will come...in judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers." At least implicitly, all of this too presupposes family worship – by monogamous males and their unadulterated wives, together with their godly children.

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The prophet himself next recorded: "Then they that fear the Lord, spake often one to another – and the Lord hearkened, and heard it." Malachi 3:16.

Needless to say, this is not true of adulterers. It is rather referring to happily married spouses (and their children) who "fear the Lord" and speak "often one to another" about Him – especially during regular family worship.

Finally, in Malachi 4:5f, the Lord promised the Hebrews: "Behold, I will send you 'Elijah the prophet' before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."

So then, the Lord – Christ the Sun of righteousness – would come. He would rise from the dead, as the Saviour of His people, on Easter Sunday. But first, Elijah-like, John the Baptizer would appear – to announce the re-erection of the broken and dilapidated family altar.

For John would "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" – also by re-establishing regular family worship in their midst. Then, after some families had resisted such promoting of the covenant and such preaching of conversion – Jehovah-Jesus Himself would "come and smite the land with a curse."¹⁸³

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Summarizing, we have seen in this chapter that the need for daily family worship – morning and evening – did not dispensationalistically decline after the flood. As before and after the fall, so too after Noah – daily household worship continued among the godly.

Indeed, this is clearly reflected in the family life of Job (1:1-13 & 2:13 & 38:4-7 & 42:8-17). It is seen also in the Pentateuch – in Genesis 12:3 & 18:19 & 26:4f & 35:1-15; in Exodus 20:1-12; in Leviticus 1:8f; in Numbers 28:3-10; and in Deuteronomy 4:8-10 & 6:5-20 & 11:19f.

This is also seen in the lives of Moses, Joshua, Samson, Samuel, David and Solomon. Thus: Hebrews 11:23-25; Joshua 24:15; First Samuel 1:11 to 3:19f; Second Samuel 6:12-20; Psalms 55:17 & 65:2 & 127 & 128 & 133; and Proverbs 1:1f & 2:1f & 3:1f & 4:1 & 22:6 & 31:1f.

¹⁸³Mal. 1:6,11; 2:14f; 3:5,16; 4:2,4.

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Finally, it is further reflected also in the Later Prophets. See: Isaiah 65:19f & 66:23; Jeremiah 10:25; Ezekiel 43:2-27 & 46:1-6; Joel 1:3f; 2:16f; 2:23-28; Zechariah 12:10-14; and Malachi 1:6-11 & 3:1-16 & 4:2-6.

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There would indeed be a human advent of the 'only Son' (as predicted by the prophet Zechariah) – of Malachi's 'Sun of righteousness' Who would rise with healing in His wings. However, that advent would first be preceded, and indeed immediately – by the conception of His fore-runner and half-cousin: John the Baptizer, the son Zacharias and Elisabeth.

Now John's parents were just(ified). Consequently, they "were both righteous before God – and kept on walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly." Hence, they must of necessity have conducted family worship in their home each day.¹⁸⁴

When their godly covenant child John was conceived, it was certain he would right then "be filled with the Holy Spirit – even from his mother's womb."¹⁸⁵ Indeed, it even seems – probably also through his own prenatal exposure to the reading out loud of the Spirit-inspired Word of God at daily household worship in his parents' home – that the unborn John kept on being re-filled with the Holy Spirit, day after day. This would then also explain how he, three months before his own birth, leaped up for joy in his godly mother's womb – when Jesus the Word of God, Himself only just conceived (according to His human nature), was brought into their home.¹⁸⁶

This is why John's godly father Zacharias, just one week after the former's birth, could confidently predict that John would "be called 'the prophet of the Highest.'"¹⁸⁷ Indeed, this is why "the child grew up, becoming strong in spirit"¹⁸⁸ – thriving under the daily family worship of his godly parents.

The same pattern of daily godliness is seen also in the home of Elisabeth's cousin Mary – and the latter's husband Joseph.¹⁸⁹ That husband was a righteous

¹⁸⁴Luke 1:5f.

¹⁸⁵Luke 1:15.

¹⁸⁶Luke 1:41-44.

¹⁸⁷Luke 1:59f,76.

¹⁸⁸Luke 1:80.

¹⁸⁹Luke 1:36-38.

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alias a just(ified) man¹⁹⁰ – and therefore himself no stranger to daily family worship.

His betrothed wife the virgin Mary, especially when she conceived her firstborn child Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, was "highly favoured" and "blessed...among women."¹⁹¹ The day she conceived Jesus, and every day thereafter, she magnified the Lord and rejoiced in God her Saviour.¹⁹²

At least some time before Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary doubtless commenced daily household worship together. Indeed, the two of them – and, as a holy family, together with Jesus both before and on the very day He was born – worshipped the Triune God.¹⁹³

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Jesus Himself was not only the unchanging God, from all eternity past. From the moment of His conception onward, He became truly human too. That very day – and no doubt also every day thereafter – he was surrounded by the prayers of His worshipping mother. From the first moment she and her husband Joseph set up home together, Jesus was surrounded by their frequent household prayers.

On the very day of Christ's birth, on which whole families of heavenly angels worshipped God in the highest, Joseph and Mary (together with the shepherds who then visited their home) and indeed also together with Jesus – themselves worshipped Jehovah. Then, eight days later, in a pious act of worship – Joseph and Mary prayerfully brought her son Jesus to receive the sacrament of circumcision.¹⁹⁴

Less than five weeks after that, they worshipfully dedicated that son to God.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, all the time, the godly Joseph and Mary marvelled at the things that were then being said about that son.¹⁹⁶

Jesus' foster-father Joseph was an ideal head of his home – which he doubtless enriched with family worship every day. He obeyed the Lord implicitly, whenever the Word of God came to him. Indeed, we are told he did so

¹⁹⁰ Matt. 1:19f.

¹⁹¹ Luke 1:28.

¹⁹² Luke 1:46f.

¹⁹³ Luke 2:11-19.

¹⁹⁴ Luke 2:21.

¹⁹⁵ Luke 1:22f.

¹⁹⁶ Luke 2:33.

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specifically – before his wife gave birth;¹⁹⁷ before her child was two years of age;¹⁹⁸ several years later in Egypt;¹⁹⁹ and shortly after that, when back again in the land of Israel.²⁰⁰ Consequently, he took his family with him and – divinely led – went to live in Nazareth.²⁰¹

Thus did Joseph and Mary – together with her young son Jesus. Not yet a teenager, it is very clear that He must have been raised from conception onward in a home which practised daily family worship. For his mother and her husband were both just(ified) and godly. So they obeyed the Word of God just as much as was humanly possible.

"When they had performed all things according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew; became strong in spirit; and kept on being filled with wisdom. And the grace of God was upon Him."²⁰²

Now Joseph and Mary the mother of Jesus "went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem" with Him, "according to the custom of the feast. Then, when they had fulfilled the days..., the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem....

"After three days, they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers – both listening to them, and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And when they saw Him, they were amazed....

"But He said to them...: 'I must be about My Father's business!' ... Then He went...and came [back] to Nazareth, and kept on being subject to them [Joseph and Mary].... And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour – with God, and man."²⁰³

From the above, the following points are clear. First, the child Jesus – when not yet a teenager – grew stronger and stronger in spirit.

Second – though again not in His divine but only in His human nature – He kept on being filled with wisdom. Surely this implies fresh infillings of the Holy

¹⁹⁷ Matt. 1:18-24.

¹⁹⁸ Matt. 2:13-16.

¹⁹⁹ Matt. 2:19f.

²⁰⁰ Matt. 2:21f.

²⁰¹ Matt. 2:22f.

²⁰² Luke 2:39f.

²⁰³ Luke 2:41-52.

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Spirit at the daily family worship services led by Joseph each morning and every evening in the latter's home. See too at note 148 above.

Third, when Jesus turned twelve and accompanied His parents when they went to the annual Passover in Jerusalem – He Himself spent perhaps the full seven days, plus three subsequent days, studying God's Word with the teachers in the temple. This evidences His comfortableness with such daily worship.

Fourth, the fact is that even those temple teachers were astounded at Jesus' understanding of their teaching – and at His catechetical answers. This strongly suggests that He had been exposed to this blessed practice each day at home previously. Indeed, everything suggests that – in His case – this had been done with an unusual intensity.

Fifth – even after becoming a teenager – it seems Jesus still continued to attend morning and evening family worship each day at home. For He kept on being subject to Joseph and Mary – while He still advanced in wisdom *etc.*

Consequently, we regard it as virtually certain that the home in which Jesus grew up – was one deeply steeped in daily family worship. Such, also with His mother Mary, would have been led by His foster-father Joseph.

This must surely have been the case, every morning and evening. It would have endured from Christ's conception onward, and throughout His teenage and manhood.

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As Judaism's renowned and hellenized philosopher Philo pointed out²⁰⁴ (around 40 A.D.) – the Jews "were from their swaddling-clothes...trained to recognize God as their Father, and as the Maker of the World." Hence, Philo continued – even as regards such Jews as had adopted Greek as their home-language – "having been taught the knowledge [of the Law of God] from earliest youth, they bore in their souls the image of the Commandments."

Also Judaism's famous historian Josephus wrote²⁰⁵ (around 90 A.D.) that Hebrew children "from their earliest consciousness...learned the laws, so as to have them...engraved upon the soul." He added that: they were "brought up on learning"; they were "exercised in the laws" of God; and they were "made acquainted with the acts of their predecessors in order to imitate them."

²⁰⁴ *Legat. ad Cajum.*, 16:31.

²⁰⁵ *Adv. Ap.*, 2:19,26; 1:8,12; 2:27.

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Let us hear also the famous Hebrew Christian Rev. Dr. Alfred Edersheim – in his massive studies on the earthly life of Jesus, our supreme Example (and our unique Saviour). Relevant are Edersheim's *Sketches of Jewish Social Life* – concerning the environment inside a typical godly home indwelt by the average Jewish child in Palestine at the beginning of the first century A.D.

Wrote Edersheim:²⁰⁶ "Before the child could speak; before it could almost understand what was taught, in however elementary language; before it would even take in the domestic rites of the recurring weekly festival, or those of the annual feasts – it must have been attracted by the so-called *mezuzah* which was fastened at the door-post of every 'clean' apartment" or room in a Hebrew home.

"The *mezuzah* was a kind of phylactery for the house, serving a purpose kindred to that of the phylactery for the person." Now both were "derived from a [rudimentarily harmless] misunderstanding and misapplication of the divine directions (Deuteronomy 6:9 & 11:20) – taking [literalistically or] in the letter what was meant for the spirit [alias symbolically].... Earlier Jewish practice [*viz.* before the apostolic age and the reactionary rise of post-Christian and indeed anti-Christian Judaism], was free from some of the present almost semi-heathenish customs" in later times to be associated with the Judaistic *mezuzah*.

Now the first-century B.C. Hebrew child not only soon saw the *mezuzah* (containing a portion of the Law of God) – even from babyhood onward. In addition, already by the time such a child was weaned he or she would often be able himself or herself also to read some portions of Holy Scripture.

When did that ability commence? Edersheim explained: "The age of five is mentioned as that when a child is expected to commence reading the Bible."

Edersheim continued: "Just before the rising of the Maccabees [during the second century B.C.] the possession of portions or [even] of the whole of the Old Testament by private families, was common in Israel.... During the period of religious revival which followed the triumph of the Maccabees, such copies of the Bible would have multiplied greatly.... There would scarcely be a pious home, however humble, which did not cherish as its richest treasure some portion of the Word of God – whether the five books of the Law, or the Psalter, or a roll of one or more of the Prophets...."

"At a later period, and probably at the time of Christ also, there were little parchment rolls specially for the use of children – containing such portions of

²⁰⁶ A. Edersheim: *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982 rep., pp. 103-16.

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Scripture as the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & 11:13-21 & Numbers 15:37-41), the *Hallel* (Psalms 113 to 118), the history of the creation to that of the flood (Genesis chapters 1 to 9), and the first eight chapters of the book of Leviticus. Such means of instruction there would be, at the disposal of Eunice in teaching her son (Second Timothy 1:5 & 3:14-17)."

Again, in his famous book *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*,²⁰⁷ the same Professor gave the following details of the life of the average Hebrew child in a godly home at the time of Christ. Explained Edersheim: "Directly the child learned to speak, his religious instruction was to begin (*Succoth* 42a) – no doubt with such verses of Holy Scripture as composed that part of the Jewish liturgy (the *Shema*) which answers to our *Creed*."

"Then would follow other passages from the Bible, short prayers, and select sayings of the sages. Special attention was given to the culture of the memory – since forgetfulness might prove as fatal in its consequences as ignorance or neglect of the Law (*Aboth* 3:9)...."

"While the earliest religious teaching would of necessity come from the lips of the mother, it was the father who was 'bound to teach his son.' To impart to the child knowledge of the *Torah* [alias the Pentateuch], conferred as great [a] spiritual distinction – as if a man had received the Law itself, on Mount Horeb [alias Mt. Sinai]."

"Every other engagement, even the necessary meal, should give place to this paramount duty. Nor should it be forgotten that, while here real labour was necessary, it would never prove fruitless. That man was of the profane vulgar (an *am ha-arets*), who had sons – but failed to bring them up in knowledge of the Law...."

"The regular instruction commenced with the fifth or sixth year (according to strength) when every child was sent to school. *Baba Bathra* 31a, *Kethuboth* 50a).... From the teaching of the alphabet or of writing onwards to the farthest limit of instruction in the most advanced academies of the Rabbis – all is marked by extreme care, wisdom, accuracy, and a moral and religious purpose as the ultimate object...."

²⁰⁷ A. Edersheim: *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, London: Longmans Green, I pp. 221 & 230 & 250-53.

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"The teaching in school would, of course, greatly be aided by the services of the synagogue – and the deeper influences of home-life.... Some portions of the Word of God, in the original, would form the most cherished treasure of every pious household.... Certain sections...were copied for the instruction of children." Thus Edersheim.

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Having grown up in such a godly home environment and together with daily family worship, Jesus was finally appointed and ordained as Prophet and Priest and King by God Himself. That occurred when the Father sent His Spirit upon the Son, at the Latter's baptism. Then "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit...to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And – as His custom was – He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day."²⁰⁸

This marked the beginning of Jesus' teaching career. Throughout, He now consistently presupposed and constantly propagated the necessity of regular family worship – especially among His followers.

Thus, His exposition of the 'Great Commandment' solidly re-endorsed the *Shema* (with the latter's insistence that parents inculcate God's Word into their children whenever all of them 'rise up' – and whenever 'they lie down'). For Christ quoted from the very words of the *Shema* – which He Himself, as God, had previously given to Moses. Now, He once more tells the Hebrews: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind!"²⁰⁹

Furthermore, in the model prayer Christ gave to His disciples, He urges all Christians to pray to His Father each day: "Give us day by day our daily bread!" – and "Give us this day our daily bread!" Indeed, He also enjoins them: "Do not be worried about tomorrow! Tomorrow, of itself, shall bring its own concerns. Each day's own evil is sufficient for that day."²¹⁰

The above teachings of Jesus clearly imply: that all Christians should pray each day; that they should pray not just when they are alone; and that they should pray each day when 'at bread' with their families. Tellingly, also the *Westminster Confession* cites this passage – precisely to prove that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily."²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Luke 3:21f; 4:14f.

²⁰⁹ Matt. 22:34-37 cf. Deut. 6:5-9.

²¹⁰ Luke 11:3 cf. Matt. 6:11,34.

²¹¹ *W.C.F.*, 21:6.

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Alexander Smith Paterson too here remarked²¹² that the words 'Give us our bread!' and 'Give us our daily bread!' here mean "that it is unlawful to indulge anxiety about futurity. 'Give us this day our daily bread!' Matthew 6:34. We are here taught to go daily unto God in prayer." Thus, according to Paterson, the Lord's Prayer implies that Christian families should confidently worship God each day, together with their eating of their daily bread – and never anxiously worry about the future.

Again, the British Puritan Thomas Watson here commented²¹³ that "we pray in the plural 'Give us [this day our daily bread!]...., praying always for all...children of the family.... A good man intercedes for others as well as for himself.... We pray not 'Give us bread for a month or a year' – but [for] a day. 'Give us this day!'"

Further, Jesus teaches Christians also: to salute whole households; to promote the integrity of marriages; to permit even the little children to come to Him; and 'always to pray' (by 'continually keeping on coming' to God). Indeed, Christ's insistence on prayerful agreement between at least two or three gathered together in His Name – is stated by both Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian to apply also to regular family worship.²¹⁴

Now a time came when some first-century priests, who had apostasized from Holy Scripture unto Judaism, were very displeased. That occurred when little children called out to the Saviour: "Save us, please!" Yet Jesus Christ then rebuked those apostate priests. He did so, by drawing their attention to certain words in an Old Testament Psalm. "Have you never read," the Jesus said to those priests, [the words of the psalm to God:] 'You have perfected praise out of the mouth of unweaned babes'?"²¹⁵

It is clear that the Great Commission of the risen Christ to His trained Ministers, requires them to evangelize also families. Consequently, it therefore implicitly includes their erecting daily household devotions too.

Matthew's version commands those Ministers to "go and disciple all nations [which include families], baptizing them...[and] teaching them" *etc.* Mark's version commands the Ministers to "go into all the World and preach the Gospel to every creature" – alias to each human being. Once again, also this latter command must include evangelizing entire families.

²¹²A.S. Patterson: *op. cit.*, p. 366.

²¹³T. Watson: *A Body of Divinity*, Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Pubs., n.d., p. 545.

²¹⁴Matt. 10:12f; 18:20; 19:5f,14f. See too at n. 266 below.

²¹⁵Matt. 21:15f *cf.* Ps. 8:2.

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Luke's version states Jesus commanded "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations." Such "nations" – once again – include families. Moreover, John's version specifically states that Christ ordered Peter: "Feed My lambs!" – and not only: "Feed My sheep!" Hence, "sheep" and "lambs" together imply also 'families' – yet once again.

No wonder! For already in the Gospel which He had brought to Abraham, God had promised him: "In you all families of the Earth shall be blessed!" Indeed, it will be remembered that Abraham worshipped God – and did so together with his entire household.²¹⁶

* * * * *

In next turning to the apostolic Christian Church, it is helpful to note that the 'house churches' referred to in the New Testament all first started off as homes in which daily family worship was practised. See: Acts 1:13f; 2:46; 10:1-48; 12:5-12f; 16:15f; 16:31f & 18:8 *etc.* See too Matthew Henry's writing *A Church in the House*, sub-titled *A Sermon Concerning Family Religion*.

There is an important and recent study by Fassler and Jeffery – on *Christian Liturgical Music from the Bible to the Renaissance*. *Inter alia*, it claimed that the most distinctively Christian gatherings of the Early Church included also family-centred meals – like those which still survive each week in the homes of religious Jews.

Such meals were accompanied by: readings from the Holy Scriptures; religious instruction; prayer; and singing. See Acts 1:13-25 & 2:42-46. Compare too: Philo's work *The Contemplative Life*; the *Qumran Scrolls*; and the *Epistle of Aristeas*.

So then, in the Biblical book of Acts, it is especially families that were brought to worship Jehovah. On Pentecost Sunday, God's Spirit was poured out "upon all flesh" – and hence even upon "your sons and your daughters." Thus the Apostle Peter then told the penitents: "The promise is unto you, and to your children."

This involved: families; family meals; and family worship. Indeed, this involvement was on a daily basis. For those penitents and their children

²¹⁶Matt. 28:19 *cf.* Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 21:15f; Gen. 12:3; 18:18f; Gal. 3:14-16,27-29.

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"daily...ate their food from house to house, and praised God with gladness and singleness of heart."²¹⁷

Here, the phrase "from house to house" could perhaps better be translated "in each one's house" (thus Zerwick's *Biblical Greek*) – or even: "in each family" or home. Hence, the clear aspect of daily family worship in the broader passage Acts 2:42-46 may here be summarized thus: "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine...and in prayers.... Continuing daily...in each family..., they praised God with gladness and singleness of heart."

Now this certainly means – no doubt also among other things – that each family of believers (the adults together with their children) ate their food and praised God at home: day by day. Acts 2:46. Compare this with Acts 5:42 – which says that "daily...in every house, they ceased not to teach." Also see: Acts 10:2f; 17:11; 20:20; First Corinthians 11:22a; and 14:35. Note too the great Protestant Reformer John Calvin's comments on all these passages (as given in chapter seven below).

Now also the proselyte Cornelius, we are told, was "a devout man." For he respectfully worshipped or "feared God together with all his household" – even before he ever met Peter. Together with his whole household, Cornelius already then "prayed to God always" – yet also at set times every day.²¹⁸

Significantly, the *Westminster Confession*²¹⁹ cites this very text to prove that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families every day." Indeed, the rest of the Biblical passage even relates: that God assured Cornelius his "prayers" were being remembered (by the Lord); that Cornelius "called together his kinsmen and near friends" when Peter came "into his house"; and that Peter assured Cornelius that his own household "prayer had been heard" even from within the walls of his home.

Cornelius, at home with his family, then told Peter: "We are all present here before God, to hear all the things which have been commanded...by God." So then – the Holy Spirit "fell upon all of those who heard the Word."²²⁰

When later giving an account of these events to the rest of the Apostles in Jerusalem, Peter said: "Already, three men had come to the house where I was [in Joppa] – sent to me from Caesarea. Then the Spirit commanded me to go with

²¹⁷ Acts 2:16-18 (cf. Joel 2:16-21) & Acts 2:38f,46f cf. 5:42 & 20:20 (cf. Matt. 10:13 & I Cor. 11:22a).

²¹⁸ Acts 10:2f & 10:30 cf. 3:1.

²¹⁹ *W.C.F.*, 21:6.

²²⁰ Acts 10:4,22,24,31,33,44.

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them, doubting nothing.... We entered into the man's house, and he showed us how he had seen an angel [or messenger] in his house, who stood and said to him: 'Send men to Joppa and call for Simon surnamed Peter, who shall tell you words by which you and all your household shall be saved!'"²²¹

Other implicit cases anent at least the inception of household worship, can be deduced from the administration of household baptisms in those homes. In this regard, compare those: in Lydia's home; in the home of the Philippian jailer; in the home of Aquila and Priscilla; in the home of Crispus; and in the home of Stephanus.²²²

Even though himself an antipaidobaptist, also the famous Evangelist Rev. Dr. John R. Rice – in the chapter on 'Family Worship' within his generally most excellent book *The Home: Courtship, Marriage and Children* – saw some of the great implications of these 'household baptism' passages. Thus, and indeed precisely to prove family worship, also Rice quotes Acts 16:33f.

There, we read about a jailer in Philippi whom Paul and Silas urged: "Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved – you and your household!" Then he "was baptized, he and all his." Thereafter, the jailer "brought them into his home; placed food in front of them; and rejoiced – believing in God with all his household."

Observed the Baptist John R. Rice²²³ (on Acts 16:33f): "That, I say, was family worship – a family scene. And do not believe that Paul and Silas had all the leadership in it! It seems evident that the jailer himself, after trusting in Christ, led his family also to follow his footsteps...."

"I have no doubt that the same kind of a scene was repeated many, many times – even when Paul and Silas had gone on their way. You see, the Christian religion is a family matter.... God intends that fathers and mothers...shall teach their children, shall worship with their children. Worship in a home is normal Christianity."

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²²¹ Acts 11:11-14.

²²² Acts 16:15; 16:31f; 18:8-11 *cf.* I Cor. 1:16; 16:15; Rom. 11:16f; 16:3-5f,10f,14f.

²²³ J.R. Rice: *The Home – Courtship, Marriage and Children*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960, p. 237. See too at n. 232 below.

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Now the Jews in Berea were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures – daily!²²⁴ At least indirectly, this certainly at least implies that also their families worshipped every day.

In Corinth, Christians ate their meals daily in their own homes – where their womenfolk were encouraged to ask their husbands to explain the difficult matters of religion "at home." Indeed, also household baptisms were practised. For even the covenant child of just one believing parent, was regarded as being among the saints.²²⁵

Everywhere, whenever the parental 'firstfruits' (alias the 'roots') were holy, so too were the offshoots (alias the 'remaining lump' and 'branches'). Consequently, even in Rome, we read of Christian worship within the home of Aquila and Priscilla – and also within the household of Aristobulus, of Narcissus, of Asyncritus, of Phlegon, of Hermas, of Patrobas, and of Hermes (together with the saints who were with them). Moreover, we further read of worship in the homes also of Philologus and Julia; of Nereus and his sister; and of Olympas – together with all the saints who were with them.²²⁶

At Ephesus, all of the "saints" alias "the faithful in Christ Jesus" – including all Christian families of husbands, wives, and children – were to worship and to serve the Lord. This they were to do also in their own homes every day of their lives, from each daybreak onward.

"Awake, you who are asleep, and arise!" Ephesians 5:14. These rousing injunctions are found in an Epistle giving far more particulars than any other part of the New Testament – about family worship.

That Epistle, on the strength of a postscript (in Ephesians 6:"24"), seems to have been written to Christians throughout the region surrounding Ephesus. For many early manuscripts of that Epistle have a blank where the phrase "at Ephesus" is found in other manuscripts at Ephesians 1:1. Hence it has been suggested credibly that the Epistle was sent around as an encyclical to various congregations in that region – much as at least also one other Epistle too was. Compare too Colossians 4:16 (in the 'sister epistle' to that sent to the Ephesians). See too Acts 16:1-4f.

"To the saints" (which includes also their tiny "offspring"), Paul says: "Wake up...and arise! ... Keep on being filled with the Spirit! Keep on speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody

²²⁴ Acts 17:11.

²²⁵ I Cor. 1:2,16; 7:14; 11:22; 14:34f; 16:15.

²²⁶ Cf. nn. 222 & 225.

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in your heart to the Lord! Keep on giving thanks always for all things to God, even to the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Keep on submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God!

"Wives, keep on submitting yourselves to your own husbands – as to the Lord! ... Husbands, keep on loving your wives – even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it [so] that He might sanctify and cleanse it.... Offspring, keep on obeying your parents in the Lord! For this is right. Keep on honouring your father and mother...so that it may go well with you, and so that you may keep on living long upon the Earth! And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but do keep on bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!" Ephesians 1:1 & 5:14 to 6:4.

In his famous sermon on *Family Worship*, sub-titled *Motives and Directions for Domestic Piety*, the great Rev. Professor Dr. J.H. Merle d'Aubigne' regarded Ephesians 5:19-20 as a commandment to conduct family worship. Also while commenting on Ephesians 5:26 to 6:4, Rev. Dr. James Montgomery Boice in his *Expository Commentary* stated²²⁷ of the word 'cleanse' that "this verb carried out the spiritual meaning of...'sanctify' or 'make holy'.... It teaches that God holds husbands responsible for the spiritual growth and maturing of their wives as well as their children. Cf. Ephesians 6:4."

Now the above passage Ephesians 5:14 to 6:4 is intimately connected also with the next (6:5-18). For even such parents were to "keep on being strong in the Lord" and to "keep on taking up...the Word of God." They were to "keep on praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" and to "keep on being watchful about this with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" – including those "saints" who were also their very own children.

As Thomas Watson remarked (in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer): "We pray, in the plural, 'Give us [this day our daily bread]!' ... Every good Christian...prays for the saints. 'Praying always for all saints.' Ephesians 6:18. These are children of the family." Moreover, in this daily family prayer, "we pray not 'Give us bread for a month or a year!'; but '[Give us bread for] a day!' 'Give us this day!'"²²⁸

Now the previously-mentioned passage Ephesians 5:14 to 6:18, and the various comments thereon to which reference has just been made, contain clear indications regarding the need for daily family worship. For first, even Christian

²²⁷ J.M. Boice: *Ephesians – An Expository Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, p. 176.

²²⁸ Watson: *op. cit.*, p. 545.

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families – after they keep on awakening from their sleep and rising up each day – are to keep on being filled with the Spirit.

Second, they are to do this by keeping on speaking the Word of God to one another. They are also to keep on singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and to keep on giving thanks always for all things, to God the Father in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Third, children are even thus to keep on obeying their parents – in the Lord. Indeed, parents are even thus to keep on bringing up their children – in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Fourth, this involves the regular use of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." It also involves "praying always...for all saints."

Fifth, praying for such "saints" certainly includes praying for and with 'tiny little saints' too. Hence – it involves praying for, and with, also the children of faithful adult Christians.

* * * * *

In Colosse, Christian families as such are clearly included among "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ." They are urged:²²⁹ "Let the Word of Christ keep on dwelling in you richly, in all wisdom – teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord!"

The passage then continues, even more specifically: "Wives, keep on submitting yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord! Husbands, keep on loving your wives, and do not become bitter against them! Children, keep on obeying your parents in all things! For this is well pleasing to the Lord.

"Fathers, do not keep on provoking your children to anger – lest they become discouraged! ... Keep on continuing in prayer, and keep on being watchful...with thanksgiving! ... Do let your speech be gracious always" – and therefore also every day!

The remarks about the previous passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians also apply equally to the above paragraph in the 'Sister Epistle' to the Colossians. For in the latter too, "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ" include all of the worshipping members of each Christian family.

²²⁹Col. 1:2; 3:16-21; 4:2-6.

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The family includes "wives" and "husbands" and "children" and "parents" and "fathers" *etc.* The Word of God is to keep on dwelling in them – as they keep on teaching and admonishing one another; as they keep on singing psalms; as they keep on giving thanks to God; as they keep on continuing in prayer; and as they keep on speaking graciously – "always."

Ephesians 5:14 to 6:18 with Colossians 1:2 & 3:16-21f & 4:2 show that also daily family worship should exhibit at least four elements. Those are: instruction, praise, prayer, and discipline (alias discipling).

First, there is instruction. Ephesians 5:29 speaks of nourishing, and Ephesians 6:4 speaks of bringing up children in the nurture of the Lord. Colossians 3:16 speaks of "teaching and admonishing one another."

Second, there is praise. Ephesians 5:19 mentions speaking "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Colossians 3:16 does exactly the same.

Third, there is prayer. Ephesians 5:20 refers to thanksgiving, and 6:18 to "praying always with all prayer and supplication." Colossians 3:17 applies "giving thanks" to "do[ing] all in the Name of the Lord Jesus" whether "in word or deed." 4:2 urges: "Keep praying...with thanks!" Thus God should be thanked also for food – at least at every family meal.

Fourth, there is discipline, alias discipling. Ephesians 5:21 speaks of "submitting yourselves one to another." Ephesians 5:22 has: "Wives, keep on submitting yourselves unto your own husbands" – while Ephesians 6:1 has: "Children, keep on obeying your parents"; and Ephesians 6:4 urges fathers to keep on bringing up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Also Colossians 3:16 speaks of discipling or "teaching and admonishing one another," while Colossians 3:18f calls upon wives to submit to their husbands, and children to obey their parents.

* * * * *

To Timothy, the Apostle Paul once wrote: "I keep on thanking God Whom I keep on serving from my forefathers." This is probably referring even to the daily family worship with which Paul too had been raised.

For, right after telling Timothy the above, Paul went on to say: "I keep on remembering you in my prayers night and day...when I recall the unfeigned faith in you which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice – and, as I have been persuaded, in you too.... You must keep on continuing in the things which you have learned and been assured about, knowing from whom you have learned them, and also [knowing] that from infancy you have known the

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Holy Scriptures which are able to keep on making you wise unto salvation – through faith in Jesus Christ!"²³⁰

From the above sentences of Paul to Timothy, at least the following points seem very clear. First, Paul himself had grown up "from" his "forefathers" – thanking God in his "prayers night and day."

Second, Paul knew that Timothy had received a similar pattern of daily family worship from his 'foremothers' Lois and Eunice. This had occurred during the period that Timothy had been growing up.

Third, it was from his infancy or even 'from fetushood' (or *apo brephous*) onward that Timothy had himself been taught specifically the Bible alias "the Holy Scriptures." The only way in which Timothy even as a baby but especially as a fetus could have been taught specifically Holy Writ – is by at least his mother and possibly also his grandmother if not his father too themselves constantly absorbing the Scriptures and thus either simultaneously or soon thereafter communicating them to the tiny Timothy. Indeed, what more natural way could this possibly have been done – than precisely in the course of daily family worship even between the times of Timothy's conception and his birth?

Fourth, the elements of this family worship with which both Paul and Timothy had been raised, included: "thanking God"; making petitions or "prayers night and day"; and knowing "the Holy Scripture" even "from infancy." More likely than not, all this occurred in the presence of their "forefathers" and foremothers (such as Lois and Eunice) – thus again presupposing daily family worship.

Fifth, this pattern of family worship was learned by both Paul and Timothy even when they were yet tiny children. Thereafter, it was no doubt increasingly practised by both of them throughout the rest of their lives.

Sixth, it seems morally certain that while yet a Rabbi – Paul had been a married man (even though he later seems to have been an unremarried widower). This is why Paul, when apparently an unremarried Apostle, gave the following injunctions to the Corinthian Christians: "Let every man have his own wife!"

Accordingly, Paul then urges: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence" (alias the required sexual intercourse)! ... To the married I command...'Do not let the wife depart from her husband!'.... Your children...are holy.... The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives, but if her husband is dead she is at liberty to be[come re]married to whom she will...in the

²³⁰ II Tim. 1:3-5; 3:14f.

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Lord... Have we [itinerant Apostles] not the authority to take a sister around as a wife?" First Corinthians 7:2f,10,14,39 & 9:5f.

Seventh, this would then also explain why Paul – without any hypocrisy whatsoever – could give similar injunctions to Timothy. Thus Paul insists: "An Overseer then should be...the husband of one wife...who keeps on ruling his own household well, while keeping his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man does not know how to rule his own household – how shall he take care of the Church of God?"

Eighth, Paul also enjoins: "Let deacons be the husbands of one wife – who keep on ruling their children and their own households well!" He seems to have encouraged marriage, and especially family worship at mealtimes. He also urged: "Do not let a widow under sixty be taken into the number [of the Deaconesses, unless] she had been the wife of one man [and]...has raised children! ... Refuse the younger widows! ... I therefore wish that the younger women marry, bear children, [and] guide the home!" First Timothy 3:2-12 & 4:1-5 & 5:9-14.

* * * * *

Before proceeding any further, we deem it to be very instructive first to heed the words of that greatest of all Baptist Preachers – the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon – on Second Timothy 3:15. We refer to his sermon thereon, in his *Treasury of the New Testament*. There, he urged:²³¹

"To be prepared for the coming conflict, we have...to live the Gospel – and also take care that we teach the children the Word of the Lord. This last is specially to be attended to [Psalm 8:2 & Matthew 21:16]. For it is by the mouth of babes and sucklings that God will still the enemy....

"Teach the children! ... In tracing the gracious work of God upon the heart of Timothy..., I shall notice that this work *commenced with early instruction*. 'From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures'....

"*Note the time of instruction*. The expression 'from a child' might better be understood if we read it 'from a very child' or, as the Revised Version has it, 'from a babe.' It does not mean a well-grown child or youth, but a child just rising out of infancy....

"We cannot begin too early to imbue the minds of our children with scriptural knowledge. Babes receive impressions long before we are aware of the fact. During the first months of a child's life, it learns more than we imagine....

²³¹ London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1934, III, pp. 880f.

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"It is well to *note the admirable selection of instructors*. We are not at a loss to tell who instructed youthful Timothy. In the first chapter of this epistle, Paul says 'when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in you which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I am persuaded in you also.'

"No doubt grandmother Lois and mother Eunice united in teaching the little one. Who should teach the children, but the parents?

"Timothy's father was a Greek.... His child was happy in having a [very] venerable grandmother, so often the dearest relatives to a little child. He had also a gracious mother....who made it her daily pleasure to teach her own dear child the Word of the Lord.

"O dear mothers, you have a very sacred trust reposed in you by God! He has in effect said to you, 'Take this child and nurse it for Me – and I will give you your wages!' ... Those who think that a woman detained at home by her little family is doing nothing – think the reverse of what is true.... Christian women, by teaching children the Holy Scriptures, are as much fulfilling their part for the Lord – as Moses in judging Israel, or Solomon in building the temple....

"Let no Christian parents fall into the delusion that the Sunday-school is intended to ease them of their personal duties! The first and most natural condition of things, is for Christian parents to train up their own children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let holy grandmothers and gracious mothers, with their husbands, see to it that their own boys and girls are well-taught in the Book of the Lord!"

Spurgeon then concluded his sermon: "Timothy became also a great champion for the faith. He came forward, and in the midst of all those who were preaching false doctrine – he stood firm to the end; steadfast, unmovable, courageous – because as a child he had known the Scripture. O teachers, see what you may do!"

* * * * *

Paul was therefore well placed to enjoin Timothy to instruct all Christians everywhere to follow also Paul's and Timothy's own exemplary daily family worship practice. The Apostle therefore reminds Timothy: "I want the men to pray, in every place!" First Timothy 2:8-15 *cf.* 4:3-6.

This statement apparently has meaning also for the father's leadership role at daily family worship. Indeed, the *Westminster Confession* (21:6) cites this very statement as one of the proofs for its claim that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily (First Timothy 2:8)."

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Paul then continues: "Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection.... For Adam was formed first – then Eve.... Adam was not deceived, but the woman...fell into transgression. Nevertheless, she shall be saved in childbearing" – or 'made happy' by 'rearing children' and teaching them daily – "provided they [the children] continue in faith and charity and holiness."

Indeed, that faith and charity and holiness of the children themselves should further extend also even to their own daily thanksgiving at family mealtimes. Thus, Paul went on also to declare:

"The Spirit expressly says that...some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to...doctrines of demons...forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from food which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.... For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer."

The full thrust of Paul's argument here clearly implies daily family worship. For his complete argument seems to run as follows:

"I want the men to pray.... Let the women learn in silence...[and] be made happy by rearing [and thus also teaching] children...[who] continue in faith.... God has created [both marriage and food] to be received with thanksgiving. For food is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer" – namely whenever so eaten every day at home. First Timothy 2:8-15 & 4:1-5.

Let us here again cite from the previously-mentioned famous book about home life authored by the Baptist Evangelist Rev. Dr. John R. Rice. For precisely here at this very point, he described also his own daily family worship practice.

Explained Dr. Rice:²³² "The mealtime is probably best for the worship period. First Timothy 4:4-5 says that 'every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.'

"That indicates that every meal ought to have prayer. It also hints at least that the Word of God should be used at mealtime.... When the breakfast meal is over, all sit at their places ready for worship.

²³²*Op. cit.*, pp. 242f.

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"Each one has a Bible of his own, and we reverently open our Bibles and look on. I start the reading of the Scriptures, reading two verses. Then the girl on my left reads two verses, and so on all around the table." Thus Rev. Dr. Rice on his own daily family worship.

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Now at daily family worship in Christian homes, ideally it is the men should take the leadership.²³³ Yet also at family worship, the womenfolk [and the children] present should undoubtedly ask their menfolk to explain God's Word – precisely when at home.²³⁴

Indeed, even outside of the daily regular worship of the whole family, also the women should certainly give instruction to their own children – if not (as with female schoolteachers) even to other children. Moreover, the older women should seek to persuade the younger women to do the same.

Thus, Paul urges Titus to instruct the older ladies to be "teachers of good things – so that they may teach the young women...to love their husbands [and] to love their children [and] to be...good homemakers [and] obedient to their own husbands, so that the Word of God should not be blasphemed."²³⁵

Naturally, in situations where the husband is dead; or away from home; or is an unbeliever; or refuses to attend or at any rate to lead the family worship – it may well become necessary for the Christian wife herself to do so, at least until such time as her husband or mature son might take over.²³⁶

Consequently, specifically young widows are not to be given long-term ecclesiastical employment. For experience has shown that they then tend to neglect that church work – and idly wander around from house to house, as tattlers and busybodies. Far rather should such young widows be urged to remarry; to rear children; and to guide their own homes.

That benevolent guidance by a widow or an ex-widow – that 'ruling a household' or *oikodespotein* – is, of course, in respect of her own minor children. It is indeed also subject to the oversight of that widow's new husband (if she remarries). Yet such guidance certainly involves that of an unremarried widowed mother too, as regards her daily instruction of her children still under her roof.

²³³ I Tim. 2:8f compare *W.C.F.* 21:6.

²³⁴ Cf. I Cor. 11:1-13 & 14:34-40.

²³⁵ Tit. 2:1-5.

²³⁶ I Cor. 7:14-17 cf. I Tim. 5:9-14.

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It further seems that those women who excelled in such domestic teaching of their own children, or in such persuading of other women to do so – can later become candidates for what might be called the job of 'Deaconess.' This is quite distinct from the male job of 'Deacon.'

There are strict prerequisites. Let no widow be taken into that number unless: at least sixty years old; she had previously been a faithful wife; she was well reported of, concerning her good works; she had finished raising her own children; and she had been hospitable to strangers.²³⁷

Thus Paul tells Timothy that no man should ever be permitted to become an Elder of the Church, unless: "the husband of one wife...; hospitable; [and] teachable" – if not also "capable of teaching" others too. For every Elder should be "one who rules his own home well, and who keeps his children in subjection with all seriousness. For if a man does not know how to rule his own home – how shall he take care of the Church of God?!"

* * * * *

Elders must themselves teach also others, and indeed precisely "from house to house." As "Overseers" appointed by the Holy Ghost, the Elders must "take heed...to all the flock...[and] feed the Church of God."²³⁸

Now that "flock" contains not only sheep, but also lambs. If a married man who wants to be an Elder neglects to feed his own lamb-like children in his own home at daily family worship – "how shall he take care of the Church of God?" Consequently, as Paul told "the Elders of the Church at Ephesus: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves – and to all the flock!"²³⁹

All candidates for the office also of Deacon must first display an exemplary home life – and a good pattern of domestic family worship. Says Paul:²⁴⁰ "Likewise, the Deacons must be serious! ... Let these too first be tested – then let them fill the office of deacon, after having been found to be blameless.... Their womenfolk too must be...faithful in everything....

"The Deacons must be the husbands of one wife – ruling their children and their own homes well." For if a Deacon is lax in the 'daily ministry' of family worship in his own household, how will he ever be able to execute the Church's 'daily ministry' to her neglected widows and orphans? Acts 6:1-7.

²³⁷ I Tim. 3:11 (3:8-12) *cf.* 5:3,5,9f *cf.* Tit. 3:1-4 and Rom. 12:13 & 16:1f.

²³⁸ Acts 20:20,28.

²³⁹ I Tim. 3:1-5.

²⁴⁰ I Tim. 3:8-12f; 5:4-12 *cf.* Acts 6:1-7.

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For especially those who are "widows indeed" – those who have no mature children or close relatives who could support them – are to be cared for by the Church. On the other hand: "If any widow has children or nephews – let them learn first to shew piety at home!" First Timothy 5:3f.

* * * * *

Even unbelievers devoid of family worship, usually provide quite well for their own households' material needs. Christians should provide even better for the material needs (as distinct from the selfish wants) of their own families. Yet they should also, and especially, cater for the daily spiritual needs of their families. Indeed, they should do so particularly by way of regular family worship.

Paul declares in First Timothy 5:8 that a Christian who "does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household – has denied the faith. He is worse than an unbeliever."

Hence, we do not hesitate to say that a Christian who does not feed his family with God's Word at daily household worship every day – morning and evening – is worse than an infidel. For the latter usually indeed feeds his family with material food – morning, and noon, and night!

Indeed, this is why Paul immediately goes on to say that only those women should be considered for appointment as Deaconesses (to care for younger widows and their children) – who were themselves at least sixty years old, and who had themselves finished raising their own children well. Younger widows applying for appointment, should be refused – and instead encouraged to remarry and guide their own homes. First Timothy 5:9-14.

The Apostle further tells Titus too that an Elder must be the husband of one wife, having faithful children who are not rebellious or unruly. For Elders must be able: to exhort by sound teaching; to repudiate those who gainsay; and to shut up the mouths of heretics who subvert whole households. Titus 1:5-13.

Paul further urges Titus to remind the aged women to teach good things to the younger women. For the latter were to love their husbands and their children; and to be good keepers at home. Titus 2:3-5.

* * * * *

In Philemon 2, Paul writes to his dearly-beloved fellowlabourer Philemon and his wife the beloved Apphia and to the church in his house. This text was given an extensive analysis by the great Baptist Preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in a sermon printed within his *Treasury of the New Testament*. Among other important truths, Spurgeon there makes also the following relevant remarks:

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"It appears that Philemon had a church in his house – a church largely if not exclusively composed of his own family.... He was privileged to possess a godly wife – the beloved Apphia.... Their sons and daughters walked in their parents' footsteps....

"Now let me be asking you whether you have a church in your house. A church, according to the New Testament, consists of converted persons – or persons who profess to be converted. No visible church is absolutely pure. A church must be taken upon its own profession....

"I see, in a family when there is a church, a godly father and a godly mother rejoicing over converted sons and daughters..... They must worship together.

"Happy is the household which meets every morning for prayer! Happy are they who let not the evening depart without uniting in supplication! Brethren, I wish it were more common. I wish it were universal....

"Now I do not suppose that you could all...expound the Scriptures.... You could not all, perhaps, sing. But I do think we might all of us manage to come together once a day at least – twice, if possible – for the worship of God in the household....

"If we want to bring up a godly family which shall be a seed to serve God [Psalm 22:9-30] when our heads are under the clods of the valley – let us seek to train them up in the fear of God, by meeting together as a family for worship.... I do not see how there can be a church in a house, unless there is constant worship in the family."

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The Epistle to the Hebrews seems to teach the same. It calls the Church a "House." However, not just for the Church but even for the Christian family – the various duties of weekly sabbath worship continue. So too do the home duties of daily family worship.

For Christians are to "exhort one another daily"; while it is called "Today" – and "while it is said "Today, when you hear His Voice, do not harden your hearts!" Under the New Testament, says the Lord, "all shall know Me – from the least to the greatest!"

Further, Christians should follow the examples of saints like Noah. He, "moved with fear, prepared an ark to save his household." That ark pointed to Christ. In Him, "marriage is honourable in everything.... By Him, therefore, let us continually keep on offering to God the sacrifices of praise – that is, the fruit of

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our lips – while giving thanks to His Name! ... For with such sacrifices, God is well-pleased."²⁴¹ Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Also the Epistle of James evidences a strong family orientation. It is concerned about orphans and widows. It condemns adultery. It exalts Abraham's family worship. It emphasizes God's Word, prayer and psalm-singing – and also the visiting of sick brethren in their own homes.²⁴²

The First Epistle of Peter is even more specific. Jesus had told Peter to feed His lambs as well as His sheep. John 21:15-17. So Peter now exhorts the Elders throughout almost the whole of Southeastern Europe to "feed the flock of God" – also by "being examples to the flock."²⁴³ What kind of examples to the flock, however, are those Elders – who neglect daily family worship especially for the little flocks of sheep and their lambs in their very own homes?

This Epistle of Peter – in the light of John 21:15-17 – thus upholds the importance of both the material and the spiritual growth not only of adults (alias 'sheep') but also of children (alias 'lambs'). It further points to Noah's daily care of his own family. First Peter 3:19f & 5:1f *cf.* Second Peter 2:5.

Moreover, it enjoins wives to subject themselves to their own husbands – even without words. Indeed, it also presupposes that husbands should pray together with their wives "so that their prayers not be hindered."²⁴⁴

This latter statement is cited by the *Westminster Confession* to prove that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily."²⁴⁵ Thus, as good "householders" or *oikonomoi*, the husbands and fathers are to keep on ministering and to keep on speaking forth the Oracles of God also to their own little flocks at home. First Peter 3:7; 4:10f; 5:2.

* * * * *

Charles Haddon Spurgeon's sermon on First Peter 3:7 – 'husbands, keep on...giving honour to the wife...so that your prayers be not hindered' – contains magnificent statements on the important of worship by husbands and wives and families together in their homes. There, in his *Treasury of the New Testament*, Spurgeon stated:

²⁴¹ Heb. 2:12; 3:2,13-15; 4:9-11; 8:11; 10:25; 11:7,23; 13:4,15f.

²⁴² Jas. 1:27; 2:11,21f; 5:7-15.

²⁴³ John 21:15 *cf.* I Pet. 5:1-4.

²⁴⁴ I Pet. 2:1f; 3:20; 3:1,7.

²⁴⁵ *W.C.F.*, 21:6.

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"To true believers, prayer is so invaluable that the dangers of hindering it is used by Peter as a motive why – in their marriage relationships and household concerns – they should behave themselves with great wisdom. He bids the husband 'dwell' with his wife 'according to knowledge' – and render loving honour to her, lest their united prayers should be hindered.... Husband and wife should pray together, as jointly heirs of grace – and any temper or habit which hinders this, is evil.

"The text would be used, most appropriately, to stimulate Christians to diligence in family prayer.... The house in which there is no family altar, can scarcely expect the divine blessing. If the Lord do not cover our habitation with His wings – our family is like a house without a roof.... Unless guarded by devotion – our family will be a field without a hedge.

"The mournful behaviour of many of the children of professing parents, is mainly due to the neglect or the coldness of family worship; and many a judgment has, I doubt not, fallen upon households – because the Lord is not duly honoured therein. Eli's sin still brings with it the visitations of a jealous God [First Samuel 2:12-34 & 4:11-21].

"That word of Jeremiah [10:25] bears hard upon prayerless families, 'Pour out Thy fury upon the households that call not upon Thy Name!' His mercy visits every house where night and morning vows are paid; but where these are neglected, sin is incurred.

"In the good old Puritan times, it was said that if you had walked down Cheapside – you would have heard in every house the voice of a psalm, at a certain hour of the morning and evening. For there was no house then of professed Christians, without family prayer. I believe that the bulwark of Protestantism against Popery, is family worship....

"If neglect of family prayer should become general throughout our churches, it will be a dark day for England. Children who observe that their parents are practically prayerless in the household, will grow up indifferent to religion – and in many cases will be utter worldlings, if not altogether atheists.... I therefore speak all the more strongly, and pray you so to order things at home that family prayer be not hindered!"

* * * * *

John's First Epistle variously addresses: his little children; sons of God; small children; young men; and fathers. It distinguishes mankind into "the children of God" (who like Abel worshipped the Lord) and "the children of the devil" (like Cain who slew his brother).

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John's Second Epistle (verses 1 & 4) is also significant. It is addressed to "the elect lady and her children" who "keep on walking in truth." Of necessity, this latter action would need to embrace also regular family worship – even "as we have received a Commandment from the Father." Thus Matthew Henry.

The Third Epistle is similar. John there writes to Gaius: "I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children keep on walking in truth."²⁴⁶

The great Baptist Preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon rightly applies this *inter alia* also to Christian children of Christian parents in Christian families. Thus, in his *Treasury of the New Testament*, he preached anent Third John 4:

"Beloved parents, it is a very great joy to us if our children learn the truth. I hope you will not suffer one of them to grow up and leave your roof without knowing the doctrines of the Gospel – without knowing the life of Christ, and the great precepts of Scripture – without having as clear an understanding as it is possible for you to give them of the great principles and plan of salvation...

"We may well rejoice in the salvation and in the sanctification of our sons and daughters... This is the way in which the Kingdom of Christ is to be extended in the World.... Happy Abraham to be followed by an Isaac; happy Lois, to have Eunice for a daughter; and happy Eunice to have Timothy for a son!

"This is the apostolic succession in which we believe, and for which we pray. How, in years to come, are we to see a seed of piety flourishing in the land [*cf. Isaiah 44:3f*] – and the World conquered to Christ?

"How indeed – but by the means of the young men of Israel! ... Oh, how holy and how heavenly ought your families to be – when God has so favoured you! ... If you have now a church in your house – maintain the ordinance of family worship with the greater zeal and holiness – and pray for others, that the Lord in like manner may visit them also!"

Also in Christ's Revelation to John, one encounters a somewhat cognate emphasis. For there too one hears some faint echoes of covenantal solidarity and family worship; or at least some implicit condemnation of its lack.²⁴⁷ Indeed, we are told that it is precisely all "the rest of the good woman's seed who keep the Commandments of God and who have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17.

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²⁴⁶I John 2:1; 2:12-14; 2:18; 3:1; 3:7; 3:10-15; 4:1; 4:4; 5:21; II John 1-5; III John 1-4.

²⁴⁷Rev. 2:17,20-23; 7:4; 12:5,11-17; 21:24-26; 22:4f.

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We would close this present chapter by letting the Bible speak on two further very important matters. First, let us look at the calamitous consequences of not holding regular family worship. Second, let us also look at the blessed benefits of starting daily family worship no later than at the very conception of one's children – and then continuing it with consistency after their birth, for as long as they remain under one's roof.

Firstly then, the disastrous effects on children caused by the lack of family worship in every epoch is referred to several times in Scripture. The general principle that children often suffer because of the sins and stupidity of their parents, is exhibited repeatedly in Holy Writ.²⁴⁸

Yet several passages in particular, clearly warn all of us about the dire consequences of specifically the sin of neglecting family worship. There is, for example, the Second Commandment. This requires that God be served in the proper way (such as even through daily family worship). It declares that God will visit the iniquity of ancestors upon their descendants down to the fourth generation of those who hate Him.²⁴⁹

So, when the priest Eli dishonoured God by neglecting to disciple alias discipline his wayward children, God announced their soon extermination.²⁵⁰ Indeed, not only would the New Testament false and immoral prophetess named Jezebel become grievously ill herself. Still more seriously, God also declared: "I will kill her children with death!"²⁵¹

Most alarming of all. The faithful prophet Jeremiah – under the true inspiration of the Holy Spirit – rightly urged God Himself to curse those families that neglect to worship Him.

Pleaded Jeremiah: "Pour out Your fury upon the heathen that do not acknowledge You, and upon the families that do not call upon Your Name!" No wonder, then, that the *Westminster Confession* cites this among several other Bible passages – to prove "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily!"²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Deut. 12:28-32 *cf.* too nn. 249-52.

²⁴⁹ Ex. 20:4f; Josh. 9:3-27.

²⁵⁰ I Sam. 2:12,22-25,30-34; 4:11,18; 15:9f; 21:1f; II Sam. 1:5-9; 12:9-16 *cf.* nn. 251-53.

²⁵¹ Rev. 2:20-23 *cf.* I Kgs. 15:9; 14:7-11; 15:29f; 22:52f; II Kgs. 5:27; 10:1-7; II Chr. 22:2-5a; Job 21:7,11,14,19; Isa. 14:4,12,21; Jer. 14:9; Ezek. 16:20f; 20:18; Am. 2:4; Zech. 5:3f; Matt. 14:3-8; II Cor. 6:18; Gal. 4:6f; Rev. 2:20-23.

²⁵² Jer. 10:25 compare *W.C.F.* 21:6.

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However, even by such dire warnings, true Christians can be comforted. As the Epistle to the Hebrews²⁵³ much explains: "Beloved, we are persuaded of better things about you, and things that accompany salvation – even though we speak like this. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which you showed to His Name when you ministered and still keep on ministering to the saints" – including the tiny saints who still "need milk" at daily family worship. For especially under God's "new covenant," the Lord says: "All shall know Me – from the least to the greatest."

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Finally, we come to assess the value of regular household worship upon one's descendants – especially from the time of conception of one's first child until the time when one's last child has left one's home. According to the Holy Bible, all such children are to be subject to ongoing religious instruction from the Word of God – for the whole time they continue living in one's house.

This is taught in many books of the Bible. In particular, one here thinks of: Genesis; Exodus; Deuteronomy; Joshua; Judges; Samuel; Kings; Chronicles; Ezra; Nehemiah; Job; Psalms; Proverbs; Isaiah; Joel; Zechariah; Matthew; Mark; Luke; John; Acts; Romans; Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Colossians; and Peter; *etc.*

All of the above-mentioned Biblical books seem to presuppose the physical presence even of covenant infants – as tiny members of God's people alias Christ's body – throughout the services of weekly divine worship. That is to say: all these Scriptures place covenant babies not in contemporaneous church nurseries or Sunday Schools, but actually within the bosom of the congregation itself throughout the public worship services. For in Scripture, such covenant infants and children are themselves present in the same worship meeting with their older fellow-Christians – regardless as to whether that be at the public worship of the congregation or at the household worship of the family.²⁵⁴

So Scripture teaches that covenant children and even infants should indeed be present in the church itself throughout its services of public worship. How much more does Scripture teach and imply the need for covenant children and even babies to be present throughout daily family worship in the home! How much

²⁵³ Heb. 6:9f; 5:12; 8:8-12.

²⁵⁴ Gen. 1:26-28; 2:21-25; 3:15-21; 4:3f; 4:26; 6:9f; 7:1-11; 8:6-12; 8:14-22; 9:1-11; 12:3; 18:19; 25:20-23; 26:4f,25; 35:1-14; 48:1f; 50:23; Ex. 20:5-12; Deut. 4:8-11; 6:6-9; 11:18-20; 29:29; 30:6; 31:11-13; Josh. 8:35; 23:15; Judg. 13:2-25; I Sam. chs. 1 to 3; II Chr. 20:13; Ezra 8:1-3,9-11; Neh. 12:43; Job 42:8-17; Isa. 40:11; 49:22f; 65:12f; Zechariah 8:4-7; Mark 10:13-16; Eph. 1:1 & 6:1-4 and Col. 1:2 & 3:16-21; *etc.*

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easier it is to care for such, during daily family worship – than it sometimes is during weekly public worship!

If covenant babies and children are not taken to church worship services each week – between the time of their infant baptism in the church right after their birth, and the later time of their confirmation as ecclesiastical communicants when teenagers – how will they ever easily settle down at regular church attendance after that? Yet still more importantly – if covenant babies and children are not taken into the family worship service every day at home from their birth onward, how will they easily sit still and learn in church each week?

Actually, all covenant infants of worshipping parents always attend both daily family and weekly public worship services – from their very conception onwards – at least until the time they are born. By what standard, then, should they ever be deprived – after birth – of this ongoing privilege? For all God's people need to worship Him in daily family devotions and in weekly public devotions throughout their lives – from the womb till the tomb.

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Summarizing this chapter, we see the practice of daily family worship among the godly continuing even after the advent of Christ. We encounter it not only in the writings of Philo and Josephus, but also in the homes of Jesus' mother Mary and also of her cousin (Luke 1:5-80 & 2:7-52 *cf.* 4:16f).

It is upheld not just in the Lord's Prayer for His disciples – 'After this manner you are to pray: Our heavenly Father..., give us today our daily bread!' – but also in the teaching of Jesus in general. Matthew 6:9-11 & 22:34-40 *cf.* Deuteronomy 6:5-9. Indeed, it would also seem to be an integral part of His Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-20 *cf.* Genesis 12:3 & 18:19.

Its continuation is implied also after Calvary. See: Acts 4:26 & 10:2f & 16:15 & 16:31f & 17:10f & 18:8f; First Corinthians 7:14 & 11:22 & 14:34f & 16:15; Ephesians 1:1 & 5:14 to 6:18; and Colossians 1:2 & 3:16f. See too: First Timothy 2:8f & 3:4 & 4:1-5 & 5:10-14; Second Timothy 1:3f & 3:14f; Titus 2:1-5; Hebrews 3:13 & 10:25 & 13:4-15; First Peter 3:7; and Second John 1-4.

IV

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

Rev. Lyman Coleman wrote a famous work titled *The Antiquities of the Christian Church* – cited also in the celebrated Rev. Professor Dr. J.W. Alexander's *Thoughts on Family Worship*. There,²⁵⁵ Coleman made (at least) two important observations of relevance to our subject:

"It was not merely...in [the] time of their meals that the primitive Christians read the Word of God and sang praises to His Name. At an early hour in the morning, the family assembled.... A portion of Scripture was read from the Old Testament, which was followed by a hymn and a prayer....

"In the evening, before retiring to rest, the [Christian] family again assembled." [Basically] the same form of worship was observed [then] as in the morning, with this difference – that the service [in the evening] was considerably protracted beyond the period which could conveniently be allotted to it in the commencement of the day."

Also after the end of the Apostolic Age, for at least another three centuries there were many references to regular family worship. This strongly shows that the Early Church, after the end of New Testament times, long continued the wholesome practice of daily household devotions.

As in the Old so also in the New Testament, whole families were taught day by day precisely in their own homes. Such was the case in respect of preparing receptive families, in their own homes, for household baptism.

This we clearly see in respect of the households of Cornelius; of Lydia; of the Philippian jailor; of Justus Gaius; of Crispus; and of Stephanus. See: Acts 10:2-48; 11:11-18; 16:14-40; 18:7; Romans 16:23-"28"; and First Corinthians 1:14-16 & 7:14 & 16:15.

The presumption is certainly that such religious instruction in these homes continued for ever, on a regular basis, also after those baptisms. Even the famous American Baptist Evangelist Rev. Dr. John R. Rice made this presumption in respect of the Acts 16:30-34 family of the Philippian jailor (see at note 223 above). Moreover, also the 95 A.D. *Didache* (alias *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) seems to have made the same presumption.

²⁵⁵Harrisonburg Va.: Sprinkle Pubs., 1991, rep., pp. 20f.

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There was thus, from the very beginning of the New Testament Church, a regular catechising even of covenant children – to prepare them, over many years, for later admission to the Lord's Supper. This ran parallel to daily family worship in their homes.

Also the very well-known scholar Joseph Bingham implies the existence of regular household worship among Christians during the Apostolic Age too. Indeed, he remarks in his famous *Antiquities* that the covenant children of believing parents – being baptized as babies while yet in infancy – "were admitted as catechumens as soon as they were capable of learning."²⁵⁶

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As the A.D. 68-95 Clement of Rome reminded the Corinthians (already in the very first chapter of his *First Epistle*), "you enjoined young men" and "you instructed your wives." He also urged (in chs. 21 & 56): "Let us train up the young men!"; "Let us direct our wives!"; "Let the children be partakers of true Christian training!" For then "your seed shall be great, and your children like the grass of the field." Job 5:25.

Also the late-first-century-A.D. document known as the *Didache*, was essentially catechetical. It re-enjoins the Ten Commandments for all, and hence even for Christians – whether parents, children, or families.

Hence, it interdicts every parent: "You must not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which has been begotten!" Compare Exodus 21:22f. "You must not remove your hand from your son or from your daughter; but, from their youth, you shall teach them the fear of God!" Compare too at Ephesians 6:4.

It also enjoins the young: "My child, flee from every evil thing! ... My child, do not be an observer of omens – since that leads the way to idolatry! ... My child, do not be a murmurer – since that leads the way to blasphemy! ... My child, him who speaks to you the Word of God – remember, night and day!" Indeed, "you must seek out – day by day – the faces of the saints [alias 'those who have been sanctified']!"

Finally, at least implicitly, it also enjoins Christian families to conduct daily family worship in their homes. Thus, in the chapter 'Concerning...Prayer,' it urges them: "Do not let your fast be with the hypocrites! For they fast on the second and fifth day of the week." Compare Matthew 6:16.

²⁵⁶ J. Bingham: *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, 10:1:4 cf. I Cor. 7:14; 10:1-18; 11:11-29; 14:20,24; 16:15; *Did.* 7:16 to 9:5.

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"As the Lord commanded in His Gospel [Matthew 6:5-13], pray like this: 'Our Father..., give us today our daily bread!'... Thrice in the day, pray thus!"²⁵⁷ For daily prayer three times a day – whether at meal-times or whenever – accords with the Biblical usage. See: Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10; and Acts 3:1f & 10:2-9.

Similarly, the 100 A.D. *Epistle to Barnabas* declared: "Be saluted, you sons and daughters, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!" The document then turned to Christian fathers and mothers, urging them also to practise "acceptable" religious deeds.

Thus it enjoined them: "Feed the hungry with your bread! Bring the homeless into your house!" Do "not [turn away] from the members of your own family! ... Give your bread cheerfully to the hungry!"

For "you must not forsake the Commandments of the Lord! ... You must not slay the child, by procuring abortion! Nor, again, must you destroy it – after it has been born! You must not withdraw your hand from your son, or from your daughter! But you shall teach them the fear of the Lord – from their infancy!"²⁵⁸

Around 107 A.D., the famous church leader Ignatius of Smyrna wrote to the Christians in Philadelphia. Said he: "It behooves you..., as a peculiar people and a holy nation, to perform all things with harmony in Christ. Wives, you must be subject to your husbands in the fear of God!" Ephesians 5:22. "Children, obey your parents [Ephesians 6:1] – and have an affection for them, as co-workers together with God in your birth!"

Ignatius continued: "I pray that, being found worthy of God, I may be found...in the Kingdom...at the feet of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob... Fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord [Ephesians 6:4], and teach them the Holy Scriptures!" Colossians 3:16-21. For in the Septuagint at Proverbs 23:24, Holy Scripture "says 'A righteous father educates well; his heart shall rejoice in a wise son.'"²⁵⁹

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So too, around 150f A.D., the apologist Justin Martyr wrote: "As many as are persuaded and believe what we teach and say is true...are instructed to pray.... At our birth we were born without our knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together; and we were brought up.... They who learn these things, are illuminated in their understandings." Indeed, Justin even applies the 'daily family worship'

²⁵⁷ *Did.* 2:2; 3:1,4,6; 4:1,2; 8:1-3.

²⁵⁸ *Barn.* chs. 1 & 3 & 19; *cf.* too ch. 6.

²⁵⁹ *Ep. ad Phil.*, IV, longer version.

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passage Psalm 128:3 to Christians – especially in terms of a triumphant eschatology.²⁶⁰

The 185 A.D. Irenaeus of Lyons presupposed the infant baptism of covenant children. Indeed, he also explained that Jesus came as a human being and grew up from infancy – in order to "sanctify...every age [group] by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself. For He came to save all, through means of Himself – all, I say, who through Him are born again to God – infants, and children, and boys, and youths....

"He therefore passed through every age [group] – becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus [also] sanctifying those who are of this age....; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord."

Irenaeus no doubt realized that, while growing up in the home of His mother and her husband, Jesus too naturally participated in their daily family worship. Even this participation by Jesus in their daily household devotions, benefits His people – both retroactively and prospectively.

It does so retroactively. Irenaeus pointed out that already "at the beginning God had respect to the gifts of Abel, because he offered with singlemindedness and righteousness."

Yet it does so also prospectively. For, explained Irenaeus of Lyons in *Celtica*, also "Cornelius was...'a devout man and one who feared God with all his house...praying to God always.'"

Indeed, added Irenaeus (quoting from Psalm 78:5), "God appointed a Law." God did so – in order "that another generation might know" and so that "the children which should be born from these..., arising, shall themselves declare [these things] to their children so that they might set their hope in God and seek after His Commandments."²⁶¹

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Around 200 A.D., Tertullian of Carthage wrote that God "gave to Adam...and Eve a Law.... In this Law given to Adam, we recognize in embryo all the precepts which afterwards sprouted forth when given through Moses [to parents for their children]. That is: 'You must love the Lord your God from your whole heart and

²⁶⁰Just. Mart.: *Ist Ap.*, chs. 61 & 65 to 66; *Dial. Tryph.* 110.

²⁶¹Iren.: *Against Heres.* 1:21:1; II:22:4; III:12:7 & 16:3 & 17:1; IV:17:5 & 18:3f; V Preface & 1:2f & 2:2f.

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out of your whole soul; you must love your neighbour as yourself!" Deuteronomy 6:4. And: "Honour your father and your mother!" Exodus 20:12.

If, continues Tertullian, Adam and Eve "had habitually loved their neighbour – that is, themselves (or 'each other') – they would not have believed the persuasion of the serpent.... Thus they would not have offended God either, as their Father Who had fashioned them from clay of the earth – as out of the womb of a mother....

"In short, before the Law of Moses written in stone-tables...there was a Law unwritten which was habitually understood naturally – and was habitually kept by the fathers. For whence was Noah 'found righteous' [Genesis 6:9 & 8:1 *cf.* Hebrews 11:7] – if, in his case, the righteousness of Natural Law had not preceded?"²⁶²

The relevance to Christian family worship of the above description of man's pre-Mosaic state, in its bearing upon the Exodus 20:12 Commandment of the Decalogue, now becomes apparent. For Tertullian went on to say "that when either of the parents has been sanctified, the children are holy." First Corinthians 7:14.

This is so "as much by the prerogative of the [Christian] seed as by the teaching of the institution" – *viz.* by ecclesiastical baptism and Christian education. Thus "the children of believers were designed for holiness, and thereby for salvation.... By the pledge of such a hope, [the Christian Apostle Paul] gives his support to matrimony – which he had determined to maintain in its integrity."²⁶³

Asked Tertullian: "Who shall 'give' me my 'daily bread'? Shall it be he who produced for me not a grain of millet-seed – or He Who even from Heaven gave to His people day by day the bread of angels? [Now] the Creator...was able to proclaim these duties and rewards by Christ – in order that man, who by sinning had offended his God, might toil on....

"Therefore, he keeps on knocking at the door of Him to Whom he has the right of access; Whose gate he has found; Whom he knows to be in possession of bread.... Even if the knocking is late in the day – it is still the Creator's time!"

Of God's ancient people, Tertullian added: "When they asked for break, He gave them manna from Heaven.... Children should obey their parents..., which is

²⁶² *An Answ. to the Jews*, ch. 2.

²⁶³ *On the Soul*, ch. 39.

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the first commandment with promise." Compare Ephesians 6:2. "Still the Law says plainly, 'Honour your father and your mother!'" Exodus 20:12.

"Again (the Apostle Paul writes): 'Parents, bring up your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord!'" Ephesians 6:4. "For you have heard how it was said to them of old time [Exodus 10:2]: 'You shall relate these things to your children; and your children in like manner to their children!'"²⁶⁴

Tertullian was even more specific when expounding the Lord's Prayer. As he explained: "In petitioning for 'daily bread' – we ask, in Christ, for perpetuity... 'Does a father take away bread from his children and hand it to dogs?' ... 'Does a father give his son a stone – when he asks for bread?' For He thus shows what it is that sons expect from their father....

"He justly adds 'Give us this day' – seeing He had previously said 'Do not worry about tomorrow [as to] what you are to eat!'" Moreover: "Who would hesitate, every day, to prostrate himself before God – at least in the first prayer with which we enter into the light of day?"

Thus: "We pray...not less than thrice in the day." Genesis 18:1-33; 19:1-27; Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10. "For we are debtors to Three – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.... Prayer is the wall of faith.... By day, we must be mindful; by night, we must be vigilant.... All [human] creatures pray!"²⁶⁵

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When writing to his wife, Tertullian gave us too even more information on daily household worship. He told her: "The union of man and woman [was] blessed by God as the seminary of the human race, and devised for the replenishment of the Earth and its furnishing.... Adam was the one husband of Eve, and Eve his one wife.... There is no place at all where we read that nuptials are prohibited.... They are 'a good thing' [Genesis 1:26-28 *cf.* 2:18-25].

"To the servant of God, forsooth, offspring is necessary. For of our own salvation we are secure enough – so that we [also] have leisure for [our] children....

"Very lately, best beloved fellow-servant in the Lord" – Tertullian went on in his epistle to his wife – "I, as my ability permitted, entered for your benefit at some length into the question [as to] what course is to be followed by a holy woman when her marriage has (in whatever way) been brought to an end.... The

²⁶⁴ *Against Marcion*, IV:26 & V:18.

²⁶⁵ *On Prayer*, chs. 6,23,29.

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rule [is] that, 'above all they [viz. faithful Christian widows] are only to marry in the Lord.'" First Corinthians 7:39.

"They...are not defiled.... Together with themselves, others also" – viz. their receptive spouses, and even more so the children of Christian widows – "are sanctified." First Corinthians 7:14.

"Whence are we to find words enough, fully to tell the happiness of that marriage which the church cements? ... What a union of two believers – one hope; one vow; one worship! ... They pray together..., exhort and support each other. Together they go to church....

"They are zealous daily.... Psalms and hymns they sing together, and they vie with each other in singing to God. Christ rejoices when He sees and hears this. He gives them His peace. Where two are together in His Name, there is He; and where He is, there the evil one cannot come."²⁶⁶ Compare further: Matthew 18:20; Second Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:19f; Colossians 3:16-19; First Peter 3:7 & 4:10; and James 5:13f.

Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff has well portrayed Christian marriage and family life during the first few centuries, in his famous *History of the Christian Church*. Wrote Schaff:²⁶⁷

"The family, though still rooted as before in the soil of nature [and] in the mystery of sexual love, is spiritualized and becomes a nursery of the purest and noblest virtues – a miniature church where the father as shepherd daily leads his household into the pastures of the divine Word; and as priest offers to the Lord the sacrifice of their common petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise....

"A large sarcophagus represents a scene of family worship. On the right, four men with rolls in their hands, [are] reading or singing; on the left, three women and a girl [are] playing a lyre....

"In the catacombs, the marriage ceremony is frequently represented by the man and the woman standing side by side and joining hands in token of close union....

"On a gilded glass of the fourth century, the couple join hands over a small nuptial altar.... Around the figures are inscribed the words: 'May you live in God!'"

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²⁶⁶ *To My Wife*, I:2,3,5 & II:1,2,8.

²⁶⁷ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968, I:443f & II:365.

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Around 220 A.D., Clement of Alexandria wrote a good deal about this subject. Said he in his *Exhortation to the Heathen*:²⁶⁸ "We trust in the living God Who is the Saviour of all men [and] especially of those who believe.... Godliness, which makes man (as far as he can) to be like God – designates God as our suitable Teacher.... This teaching, the Apostle [Paul] knows as truly divine.

"'You, O Timothy' – he says – 'have from childhood known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ' [Second Timothy 3:15]. For truly holy are those Scriptures that sanctify....

"The writings or volumes of which those Holy Scriptures consist, the same Apostle consequently calls: 'inspired by God...[and] profitable for doctrine...[and] for instruction in righteousness – [so] that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good work' [Second Timothy 3:16f]....

"'Taste and see that Christ is God' or good [Psalms 34:8]! Faith will lead you on; experience will teach you; Scripture will train you. For it says [Psalm 34:11] – 'Come here, O children; listen to me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord!'"

In Clement of Alexandria's view of family worship, it is especially after weaning that religious knowledge is to be imparted systematically to the growing child. This he explains in his great work *Paidagogue* (alias *Instructor*). Fundamentally, that 'Instructor' is – in the last analysis – the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

"My children," explains Clement in his *Paidagogue*,²⁶⁹ "our Instructor is like His Father God – Whose Son He is.... The virtue of man and woman is the same.... Marriage [is] an equal yoke.... The rewards of this social and holy life...is based on conjugal union.... Common therefore also to men and women, is the name of 'man'....

"Paedogogy is the training of children (*paidoon agoogee*).... Jesus said, 'Suffer the children and forbid them not to come to Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven' [Matthew 19:14].... Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, You have perfected praise [Matthew 21:16 cf. Psalm 8:2]...as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings [Matthew 23:37]....

"We also in truth, honouring the fairest and most perfect objects in life with an appellation derived from the word 'child' – have named 'training' *paideia*, and 'discipline' [alias 'training'] *paidagoogia*. 'Discipline' we declare to be 'right guidance from childhood to virtue'....

²⁶⁸ *Exhort. to the Heath.*, ch. 9.

²⁶⁹ *Instructor*, 1:2-7,12; II:4,9f; III:10-12.

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"Jesus placed a little child in the midst, saying, 'Whosoever shall humble himself like this little child, the same shall be the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven' [Matthew 18:4]. He does not then use the appellation of 'children' – on account of their very limited amount of understanding from their age....

"Nor – if He says 'Except you become as these children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of God' – are His words to be understood as meaning 'without learning'.... Scripture calls the infant children 'lambs' [John 21:15]....

"The Apostle says to children in Christ: 'I have fed you with milk, not with meat. For you were not able, neither yet are you now able'" to digest solid food (First Corinthians 3:2). In saying, therefore, 'I have given you milk to drink' – has He not indicated the knowledge of the truth? ... For children at the breast, milk alone suffices.... You see another kind of food," however, once you have been weaned from milk.

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"It is time for us, in due course, to say Who our Instructor is. He is called Jesus. Sometimes He calls Himself a Shepherd, and says, 'I am the good Shepherd' [John 10:11]. According to a metaphor drawn from shepherds who lead the sheep, this is to be understood of the Instructor Who leads the children – the Shepherd Who tends the babes....

"So the Word Who leads the children to salvation, is appropriately called the *Instructor* (Paidagogue).... The word 'instruction' [*paidagoogia*] is used variously.... For there is the instruction of him who is led and learns; and that of him who leads and teaches.... There is, thirdly, the guidance itself; and fourthly, what is taught (as the Commandments enjoined)....

"It were a fitting sequel that our Instructor, Jesus, should draw for us the model of the true life – and train humanity in Christ.... But let us, O children of the good Father – nurslings of the good Instructor – fulfil the Father's will; listen to the Word; and take on the impress of the truly saving life of our Saviour....

"The Spirit, distinguishing the divine service from revelry, sings 'Praise Him with the sound of trumpet!' ... 'Praise Him on the psaltery.' ... For the tongue is the psaltery of the Lord. 'And praise Him on the lyre!' [Psalm 150:3-5]. By the lyre is meant the mouth, struck by the Spirit.... Our body He calls an organ, and its nerves are the strings by which it has received harmonious tension.... When struck by the Spirit – it gives forth human voices....

"Let our genial feeling...be twofold, in accordance with the Law! For 'if you shall love the Lord your God' and then 'your neighbour' – let its first

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manifestation be towards God in thanksgiving and psalmody! ... Says the Apostle, 'Let the Word of the Lord dwell in you richly!' [Matthew 22:37-39 *cf.* Colossians 3:16]....

"This Word suits and conforms Himself to seasons; to persons; to places.... Before partaking of sleep – it is a sacred duty to give thanks to God, having enjoyed His grace and love, and so go straight to sleep."

Certainly this suggests evening devotions. Implicitly, that would include also evening household worship exercises – daily – in respect of those living together as families.

Clement soon went on to imply the desirability of also morning worship sessions – including also family devotions very early every day. "We must sleep so as to be awakened easily," he explained. "For it is said, 'Let your loins be girt about and your lamps burning and you yourselves like men who wait for their Lord! ... Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He comes, shall find awake!' [Luke 12:35f].... 'Let us then not keep on sleeping the way others do but let us be watchful,' says the Scripture.... 'For you are all children of the light, and children of the day' [First Thessalonians 5:5-8]."

Continued Clement of Alexandria: "Let temperance raise us, as from the abyss beneath, to the enterprises of wakefulness.... For those who have the sleepless Word dwelling in them, ought not to keep on sleeping the livelong night! But they ought to rise during the night, especially when...coming to an end." Then: "One should devote himself to literature; another begin his art; [and] the women handle the distaff [*cf.* Proverbs 31:10-19].... All of us should, so to speak, fight against sleep...so that through wakefulness we may partake of life for a longer period."

The passage Ephesians 5:14 to 6:18 puts all of this into the context of daily family worship, early every morning. It declares of God: "He keeps on saying: 'Awake, you who are asleep!' [*cf.* Romans 13:11f].... Christ shall give you light! ... Keep on speaking to yourselves in psalms! ... Wives, keep on submitting yourselves to your own husbands! ... Husbands, keep on loving your wives! ... Children, keep on obeying your parents! ... Fathers, do not keep on provoking your children to anger; but do keep on bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! ... Keep on taking up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God! ... Keep on praying always, with all prayer and supplication, in the Spirit!"

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As Clement observed: "The soul...[is] always contemplating God and, by perpetual converse with Him, inoculating the body with wakefulness. It raises man.... From the practice of wakefulness, it grasps the eternity of life.... Those who have been joined in matrimony, are to raise up children.... For He said, 'Multiply!' Under this is to be heard: 'Let man be God's image! – inasmuch as man co-operates in generating human beings.'"

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Clement of Alexandria thereafter went on to stress the differences between the sexes – even when they worship together at home and in public. Declared Clement: "On whom does the presbyter lay his hand? Whom does he bless? Not the woman.... 'The man is head of the woman, and God of the man' [First Corinthians 11:3]....

"The Instructor orders them [women] to go forth 'in becoming [or modest] apparel...subject to their own husbands; so that, if any [husbands] do not obey the Word, they may without the word be won by the behaviour of the wives.... Let their adornment...be...even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God' [First Timothy 2:9 & First Peter 3:1-4f]!"

Yet women and also children should think deeply about their own involvement in daily family worship. Asked Clement: "How, pray, do you love God and your neighbour – if you do not philosophize? And how do you love yourself, if you do not love life? It is said, 'I have not learned letters!' But [even] if you have not learned to read – you cannot excuse yourself in the case of hearing....

"Women and men are to go to church...[and] to pray to God.... Let the woman observe this further.... It is becoming for her to pray....

"Beginning at home with marriage, we should exhibit propriety.... 'For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayer' [Psalm 34:15f *cf.* First Peter 3:1-7]....

"What has to be observed at home, and how our life is to be regulated, the Instructor has abundantly declared.... The things which He is wont to say to children...while He conducts them to the Master, these he suggests – and adduces the Scriptures themselves, in a compendious form....

"We have the Decalogue.... These things are to be observed – and whatever else is commanded in reading the Bible.... Domestic too are to be treated like ourselves; for they are human beings, as we are.... Such are the laws of the Word...inscribed on men's hearts...so that the faith of the children may be impressed on softened hearts....

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"Let wives be subject to their own husbands, as unto the Lord! And let husbands love their wives, as Christ also has loved the Church! ... Parents, do not provoke your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! ... Do not despise prophecies! ... Continue in prayer!"

Further: "Nourish yourselves in the words of faith! Exercise yourselves unto godliness! ... Innumerable commands such as these are written in the Holy Bible, appertaining to chosen persons." Ephesians 5:22 to 6:9; First Thessalonians 5:13f-20; Colossians 3:15-21 & 4:2; First Timothy 4:3-8.

"Let us run, as children, to our good mother!" – concludes Clement. "And if we become listeners to the Word – let us glorify the blessed dispensation by which man is trained and sanctified as a child of God!"

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This then brings us to the *Hymn to Christ the Saviour*. It is almost certain that it was composed by Clement. A few verses of it seem to relate to daily family worship, and run as follows:

"Shepherd, with wisdom tending lambs of the royal flock –
bring Your simple children into one,
that they may sing in solemn lays
their hymns of praise
with guileless lips to Christ their King!

Nourished by the milk of Heaven....,
let sucklings join to raise
with pure lips our hymns of praise
as grateful offerings, clean and pure, to Christ our King!

"Babes nourished with tender mouths filled with the dewy Spirit...,
let us sing together simple praises –
true hymns to Christ...for the teaching of life in all things,
as Your Holy Scriptures teach!"

Clement further commanded all married Christians to pray and to read the Scriptures together, as a daily morning worship exercise. He then explained: "The mother is the glory of her children; the wife is the glory of her husband; both are the glory of the wife; and God is the glory of all together." See Proverbs 31:10-31 & First Corinthians 11:7-12.

There is also a prayer for the daily evening worship exercise – *The Eventide Hymn*, alias *The Hymn for the Lighting of the Lamps*. This evening hymn – doubtless uttered in the family home around supper-time at candlelight – was

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composed perhaps by our Clement, and was certainly quite well-known to him. It runs as follows:

"Jesus Christ, serene light
of the holy glory of the everlasting Father –
having come to sunset, and seeing the evening light,
we praise the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit of God!
It behooves us to praise You at all times with holy songs,
Son of God Who has given life.
Therefore the world keeps on glorifying You!"

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There are also the *Miscellanies* (alias the *Stromata*) of Clement the Alexandrian. When the Lord first instituted marriage, explained Clement in his *Stromata*,²⁷⁰ "His end was to lead us away from unrighteousness unto righteousness – by choosing honest marriage; and the procreation of children; and the good institutions of life.... Therefore Peter and Philip procreated children [Mark 1:30f & Acts 21:8f].... And Paul indeed certainly says [in First Corinthians 9:5]...'Do we not have the power to take a sister around with us, as a wife?'

Clement applied the famous phrase anent 'two or three met together in My Name' of Matthew 18:20 – also to family worship. He then continued: "'Honour your father and your mother, that it may go well with you' [Exodus 20:12].... 'My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble. For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them' (Isaiah 65:23f).

"For to him who procreates and educates and trains in the Lord according to the Word – it will be just as elect a seed as...to him who generates through true catechizing.... 'You have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers' (First Corinthians 4:15)....

"We do not say that woman's nature is the same as man's.... She is destined for child-bearing and housekeeping.... 'The head of the woman is the man.... Neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman – in the Lord.'" First Corinthians 11:3,8,11.

²⁷⁰ *Strom.* III:10,15,18 & IV:8, quoting Matt. 18:20 & Isa. 65:23 & I Cor. 4:15 & Col. 3:18-25 & 4:1 & 3:11.

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Clement then concluded: "Women are therefore to philosophize equally with men! ... 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as is fit in the Lord!' (Ephesians 5:21 to 6:4)... 'Husbands, love your wives! ... Children, obey your parents.... Fathers, do not provoke your children!' (Colossians 3:18-25)... Young, as well as old, ought to philosophize!" A stronger argument for daily family worship, would be hard to imagine.

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Around 230 A.D., the great Origen of Alexandria wrote about the family worship implications of the Fifth and Seventh Commandments ('honour your father and your mother!' and 'you shall not commit adultery!').²⁷¹ He also went on to say that among Christians, people "may see those who are not altogether infants" – those who are "up to three or four years of age" or even a little older – "who have been converted."

This is just "as the Word shows – like the little child which Jesus took to Himself [Matthew 18:5].... In the whole multitude of believers, then" – explained Origen of mature proselytes to Christianity – there "are also those who have been...converted just recently." Such are to be compared with "the little children" – alias the infants of covenant parents.

The following passage in Origen is especially significant. "The husband," he said, "must dwell with the wife as the weaker vessel, giving her honour and bearing her burdens in sins."

Here, Origen seemed to be thinking of both Galatians 6:2 and First Peter 3:7. Indeed, the latter passage even tells every husband why he must keep on dwelling with and continue honouring his wife – "so that your prayers should not be hindered!"

The implications of this for family worship, are obvious. For Origen next immediately went on to argue that the Biblical statement that "'the twain shall become one flesh' – teaches... 'that they are no more twain, but one flesh'.... [For] 'what God has joined together, let no man put asunder!'" Matthew 19:4-6.

Explained Origen: "Wherever there is indeed concord and unison and harmony between husband and wife – when he is a ruler and she is obedient to the words 'he shall rule over you' [Genesis 3:16] – then, of such persons we may truly say 'they are no more twain'....

²⁷¹ *On the Principles* II:4:2 & IV:1:19; *Comm. on Matt.* XI:9.

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"Those who are joined together by God, both mind and keep the precept: 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also the Church!' [Ephesians 5:25]. The Saviour then commanded [Matthew 19:6]: 'What God has joined together, do not let man put asunder!'"²⁷²

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Around 250 A.D., Cyprian of Carthage emphasized the importance: of continual prayer; of covenantal solidarity between believers and their children; of the Fifth Commandment; and of caring for widows and orphans.²⁷³ In addition, however, he also gave important details of the need to pray for and with our families – every day.

First, the Carthaginian Cyprian deals with the situation where "there are many children at home." Here, he explained: "the sins of the many have to be redeemed; the consciences of many to be cleansed; the souls of many to be liberated.... In the spiritual and heavenly life, the larger the number of children you have – the greater ought to be the outlay of your labours.

"Thus, also Job offered numerous sacrifices on behalf of his children.... Since there cannot fail to be sins committed in the sight of God – there was no lack of daily sacrifices with which the sins might be cleansed away. The Holy Scripture proves this, saying: 'Job, a true and righteous man, had seven sons and three daughters. He cleansed them, offering victims to God for them according to the number of them, and for their sins.' Job 1:5, LXX.

Cyprian next pointed Christians in his own day and age to the unchanging God of Job. "Let Him be the Guardian of your children! Let Him be their Trustee! Let Him be their Protector, by His divine majesty, against all worldly injuries....

"This is, with paternal affection, to take care for one's future heirs according to the faith of the Holy Scripture. That says: 'I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed lacking bread. All the day long, he is merciful – and lends out. Indeed, his seed is blessed.'" Psalm 37:25f.

"Therefore, you are an unfair and a traitorous father – unless you [keep on] consulting faithfully for your children, and keep on looking forward to preserving them in religion and true piety!" Thus, Cyprian warned worldly parents in respect of their families: "You are careful for their earthly rather than for their heavenly estate! Rather than commend to your children the aid of God their Father – you teach your children to love their property, more than Christ!"

²⁷² *Ib.*, XIII:16f & XIV:16.

²⁷³ *Ep.* 7:5 & 72:17-19; *Tract.* XII:70,113,120.

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The corrective, however, is simple. We must follow the family worship examples of fathers like Job and Tobiah. Regarding the latter, Cyprian enjoined: "Give useful and saving precepts to your pledges, such as he gave to his son! Command your children what he also commanded his son, saying: 'And now, my son, I command you – serve God in truth and do before Him that which pleases Him!' Command your sons to do righteousness...and to be mindful of God and to bless His Name always!' And again: 'All the days of your life, most dear son, have God in your mind – and do not be willing to transgress His Commandments! Do righteousness all the days of your life!'"

For, explained Cyprian, "he who has begun to be Christ's disciple – renouncing all things according to the Word of his Master – ought to ask for his daily food.... Christ's disciple asks food for himself for the day – since he is prohibited from thinking of the morrow [Matthew 6:11 & 6:34].... For daily bread cannot be lacking to the righteous man – since it is written [Proverbs 10:3 *cf.* Psalm 37:25]: "The Lord will not slay the soul of the righteous by hunger!"²⁷⁴

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Perhaps before 325 A.D., that very interesting and valuable document known as *The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* – a goldmine of ancient liturgy – reached its final form.²⁷⁵ We ought, it said, to keep "in mind the Oracles of Christ – meditating on the same, continually.

"For so the Scripture says to you: 'you must meditate in His Law day and night – when you walk in the field; and when you sit in your home; and when you lie down; and when you get up! Thus, you may get understanding in all things.'" Deuteronomy 6:7 & Joshua 1:8.

"This should be the case especially with Ministers. For "an Overseer ought to be [one] who has been the 'husband of one wife' who also herself has no other husband – 'ruling well his own house.'" First Timothy 3:4f.

"In this manner, let examination be made – when he is to receive ordination" – as to "whether he be grave, faithful, decent; whether he hath a grave and faithful wife...; whether he has educated his children piously; and [as to whether he] has 'brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'"²⁷⁶ Ephesians 6:4.

²⁷⁴ *Ib.*, VIII:18-20 & IV:19-21.

²⁷⁵ See *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970 rep., VII p. 388.

²⁷⁶ *Ap. Const.*, 1:2:4 & II:1:2.

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The Fifth Commandment – maintained the *Constitutions* – has both parental and catechetical implications.²⁷⁷ Consequently: "you fathers – educate your children in the Lord! Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! ... Do not be afraid to reprove them, and to teach them wisdom – with severity! For your corrections will not kill them – but rather preserve them.

"As Solomon says...: 'Chasten your son, and he will refresh you! In this way, you will have good hope of him. Truly, you will hit him with the rod – but save his soul from death.'" Proverbs 24:17; 19:18; 23:14.

"Again, the same Solomon says this: 'he who spares his rod, hates his son!'" Proverbs 13:34. "And afterwards: 'beat his sides while he is an infant – lest he be hardened, and disobey you!'

"He therefore who neglects to admonish and instruct his own son, hates his own child.... Teach your children the Word of the Lord! Bring them under, with cutting stripes! ... Make them subject, from their infancy – teaching them the Holy Scriptures which are Christian and Divine!"²⁷⁸

Concerning the Law – continued the *Constitutions*²⁷⁹ – "Moses says: 'you shall meditate on the Word which I command you; sitting in your house, and rising up, and walking in the way!'" Deuteronomy 6:6. And of the godly man. David says: 'his delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in His Law he will meditate day and night.'" Psalms 1:2.

"The Law has honoured marriage, and has called it blessed – since God, Who joined male and female together, has blessed it." Genesis 1:28. "And David says: 'your wife is like a flourishing vine at the sides of your home; your children, like olive-branches round about your table. Look, this is the way the man who fears the Lord shall be blessed!'" Psalm 128.

It continued:²⁸⁰ "You must be observant to your father and mother, as the causes of your being born – so that you may live long in the land which the Lord your God gives you! Do not overlook your brothers or your kinsfolk! For: 'you must not overlook those closely related to you!'" Isaiah 58:7.

On the other hand, however, "'the way of death' is known by wicked practices. For therein is: the ignorance of God...; idolatries...; murderers of infants; [and]

²⁷⁷ *Ib.*, II:5:33.

²⁷⁸ *Ib.*, IV:2:11.

²⁷⁹ *Ib.*, VI:5:23,28.

²⁸⁰ *Ib.*, VII:2:15-18.

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destroyers of the workmanship of God... May you, children, be delivered from all these!"

Significantly, these *Apostolic Constitutions* also provided Christian families with model 'Daily Prayers' for this very purpose. Thus, in the 'Morning Prayer' they were to pray together: "We praise You; we sing hymns to You; we bless You; we glorify You; we worship You! ... For You alone are holy! You are the Lord Jesus, the Christ of the God of all created nature!"

Again, in the 'Evening Prayer' they were to pray together: "Children, praise the Lord! ... Now, O Lord, let Your servant depart in peace!"

Indeed, there was even 'A Prayer at Dinner' where the family was to pray: "You are blessed, O Lord! You keep on nourishing me from my youth [and] You keep on giving food to all flesh! Fill our hearts with joy and gladness – so that we may abound unto every good work!"²⁸¹

Moreover, the *Constitutions* even added a further prayer – for use first thing in the morning. Thus they enjoined: 'let all the faithful, whether men or women, praise when they rise from sleep; when they have washed themselves; before they go to work!"²⁸²

Clearly, then, also the *Apostolic Constitutions* strenuously promoted daily family worship. Indeed, they made special provision for this – every morning, and every evening.

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The great Athanasius of Alexandria,²⁸³ at Easter in 339 A.D., wrote that "the righteous and faithful servants of the Lord...are made disciples for the Kingdom of Heaven...and bring forth from it things new and old." Matthew 13:52. They "meditate on the Word of the Lord when sitting in the house; when lying down or rising up; and when walking by the wayside." Deuteronomy 6:7.

These are those who could truthfully say that both yesterday evening and early today: "I have remembered You on my bed; and in the morning, have meditated on You!" Psalm 63:6. These are they who pray early every day: "My eyes go forth ahead of the dawn – so that I may meditate on Your Word!" Psalm 119:148.

²⁸¹ *Ib.*, VII:5:47-49.

²⁸² *Ib.*, VIII:4:32.

²⁸³ *Ep.*, XI:6f.

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The 350 A.D. Cyril of Jerusalem was arguably the greatest catechist the Christian Church ever had. Yet, though apparently unmarried,²⁸⁴ he nevertheless regarded the catechizing of children as being the religious responsibility primarily of the parent – rather than that of the Church.

Wrote Cyril: "While honouring our heavenly Father – let us honour also 'the fathers of our flesh' [Hebrews 12:9].... The Lord Himself has evidently so appointed – in the Law and the Prophets." Deuteronomy 5:16.

"He says: 'honour your father and your mother, so that it may go well with you – and so that your days shall be long in the land!' And let this Commandment [at Colossians 3:20] be observed especially by those here present who have father and mothers: 'Children, obey your parents in all things! For this is well-pleasing to the Lord!'"²⁸⁵

Consequently, concluded Cyril:²⁸⁶ "If you have a child according to the flesh, admonish him! ... If you have begotten [some]one through catechizing – put him also on his guard!" See First Corinthians 4:15.

* * * * *

The 370f A.D. Gregory of Nazianzen was even more explicit. God Himself – wrote Gregory²⁸⁷ – "gives laws for...husbands and wives, parents and children." Ephesians 5:22,25 & 6:1-4.

So, Gregory went on to say:²⁸⁸ "I am one of those who entirely approve that Word which bids us meditate [upon it] day and night [Psalm 1:2]; or tell [about it] at eventide and morning." Psalm 55:17.

This should be done, "to use Moses' words – whether a man lie down; or rise up; or walk by the way[side]; or whatever else he be doing." Deuteronomy 6:7. Thus Gregory.

The Nazianzene Gregory had started to learn all of this from his own mother Nonna, when he was still a baby in her womb. For Nonna herself had practised daily household worship most regularly.

Gregory had learned this yet more – when later a tiny infant on her knee. She had won her own husband for the Lord. Indeed, she also raised all three of their

²⁸⁴ *Cat. Lect.*, IV:24 cf. XI:1,33f.

²⁸⁵ *Ib.*, VII:15.

²⁸⁶ *Ib.*, XV:8 & XXIII:15 cf. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* III:15.

²⁸⁷ *Def. Fug. ad Pont.*, ch. 54.

²⁸⁸ *Prelim. Disc. adv. Eunom.*, ch. V.

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children – Gregory, Gorgonia, and Caesarius – 'upon the roll of the saints' and within Christ's Church.

Subsequently speaking at his funeral, Gregory very modestly admitted²⁸⁹ that his deceased father "sprang from a stock...not well suited for piety. For I am not ashamed of his origin – in my confidence, at the close of his life.... Even before he was of our fold" when he joined the Christian Church, however, "his character made him one of us."

At Proverbs 31:7-10 and also elsewhere in Holy Writ, continued Gregory, "I have heard the Scripture say 'Who can find a valiant woman?'; and declare that she is a divine gift; and that a good marriage is brought about by the Lord.... The most excellent of men and of women were so united, that [also] their marriage was a union of virtue."

Gregory then went on to speak about his own godly mother. He clearly explained: "She who was given by God to my father, became not only...his assistant but even his guide – drawing him on by her influence in deed and word.... She applied herself to God and divine things....

"What time or place for prayer ever escaped her? ... Whoever paid such reverence to the hand and countenance of the presbyters? ... Or whoever stood like a pillar, at the long night and the daily psalmody?

"These things, small as they are, are in my eyes most honourable – since they were the uncoverings of her faith, and the undertakings of her spiritual fervour.... It was on her part a great undertaking to promise me to God before my birth, with no fear of the future, and to dedicate me immediately after I was born."

Gregory further described the remarkable results of his mother's prayers for her own husband. "She fell before God night and day – entreating for the salvation of her head with many fastings and tears, and assiduously devoting herself to her husband....

"The salvation of my father...was a concurrence of the gradual conviction of his reason.... His wife was frequent in her supplications and prayers.... So my father yielded himself to God.... He was most consistent with himself and his early days....

"He was next entrusted with the Presbyterate [in the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments].... By constant meditation upon the Divine Word – though a later

²⁸⁹ *Orat. 18, De Mort. Pat. 1-18.*

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student of such matters – he gathered together...much wisdom within a short time....

"He became the father and teacher of orthodoxy.... He, like the great Noah – the father of this second World – made the Church to be called the New Jerusalem." See: Galatians 3:16f,27f; 4:26; Revelation 3:12; 21:2-14f; 22:3-5,19.

Such was the godly home in which Gregory grew up. No wonder, then, that Gregory himself could say of his father: "I was his partner in piety and activity, aiding him in every effort on behalf of what is good."

Indeed, also Gregory's sister Gorgonia – growing up in the same godly home – became similarly dedicated to the Lord. Of her, Gregory wrote that also after her marriage, "she consecrated herself entirely to God. But what is most excellent and honourable – she also won her husband over to her side, and made of him a good fellow-servant....

"Not only so.... She further made the fruit of her body, her children and her children's children, to be the fruit of her spirit."

In that way, explained Gregory Nazianzen of his godly mother Nonna, her fruitfulness was not only uninterrupted but also expansive. For she went on "dedicating to God not just her own single soul, but the whole family and household."²⁹⁰

Around 375 A.D., Basil the Great wrote as an unmarried monk. This was at the beginning of a time of ecclesiastical decline. Nevertheless, he too seems to have presupposed daily family worship.

Stated he: "The common law of human nature makes 'elders' [to be] 'fathers' to youngsters. And the special peculiar law of us Christians, puts us [Church] 'Elders' in the place of 'parents' to the younger."

Significantly, Basil added that "children are not to be received from their parents" – by monks, into monastic office. Instead, "they are to be instructed carefully in the Scriptures. They are not to be allowed to make any [such] profession – till they come to years of discretion."

Furthermore, explained Basil, we should all obey the words of the Psalmist." Here he referred to Psalm 55:17 – namely: "'evening and morning...will I pray and cry aloud.'"

²⁹⁰ *De Gorg.*, 8.

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This, added Basil, means the following: "Before dawn, we should rise and pray again.... As it is written: 'my eyes prevent the night watches'"²⁹¹ – or 'go forth ahead' of the dawn vigil, at the end of the night.

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The great Jerome of Bethlehem wrote from around 385 A.D. onward. He conceded that "the old law" also had its "ideal of blessedness." That ideal was found in magnificent maxims. Such, he said, included: "blessed is he who has seed in Zion and a family in Jerusalem!" – and: "your children shall be like olive-plants round about your table!" Isaiah 32:9 LXX, and Psalm 128:3.

Jerome continued: "Prayers, as everyone knows, ought to be said...at dawn and at evening. No meal should be begun, without prayer; and before leaving table, thanks should be returned to the Creator....

"Peter too speaks" about spouses praying – "as being heirs together of the manifold grace of God." First Peter 3:7 *cf.* 4:10. Moreover: in Second Timothy 3:14f, Paul "writes to Timothy who had been trained in the Holy Writings from childhood – exhorting him to study them diligently." For "the Commandment says: 'honour your father!'"²⁹² Exodus 20:12.

"In days gone by," declared Jerome, "men rejoiced to hear it said of them: 'your children shall be like olive-plants round about your table!' – and: 'you shall see your children's children!'" Psalm 128:3-6. "Also in the Gospel...the Lord discusses that Commandment of the Law which says: 'honour your father and your mother!'" Matthew 15:3-9 & 19:19 *cf.* Exodus 20:12.

Consequently, Jerome referred also to "Cornelius" (that "'devout man'" of New Testament times) who "'feared God with all his house...and prayed to God always'.... Truly did he 'fear God with all his house.'"²⁹³

Even in the monasteries of Jerome's own day, something still remained of the earlier and happier Biblical usage. Also in the nunneries, he explained,²⁹⁴ "although they worked and had their meals separately from each other" – they "met together for psalm-singing and prayer....

²⁹¹ *Ep.* 276 & *Reg.* 15 & 37 (compare *Nic. & Post-Nic. Fath.*, Eerdmans ed., VIII pp. 1f & 111f).

²⁹² *Ep.* 22:21,27; 48:4; 53:3; 54:3.

²⁹³ *Ep.* 123:12,6; 79:2.

²⁹⁴ *Ep.* 108:20.

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"At dawn" and "at evening...they recited the psalter, each in turn. No sister was allowed to be ignorant of the psalms, and all had to learn a certain portion of the Holy Scriptures every day."

Indeed, the so-called 'seven canonical hours of prayer' had not yet finally been fixed as mandatory – by the now-deforming Church. Such a strict rigidity would arise only in the future.

* * * * *

One good nunnery, in Bethlehem, was founded by the older Paula. On the advice of Jerome, she and her daughter Eustochium took the latter's niece – and raised her there. Indeed, the latter – the younger Paula – eventually succeeded Eustochium as the head of that nunnery.

Previously, however, the younger Paula's mother Laeta – who was the daughter-in-law of the elder Paula – had written to Jerome about the education of her daughter. So it was to Laeta that Jerome then gave the following advice – as to how she ought to raise her young daughter Paula to serve the Lord.

"You yourself are the offspring of a mixed marriage" – Jerome clearly explained to Laeta. "But the parents of [the younger] Paula – you and my friend Toxotius – are both Christians. Who could have believed that to [Laeta's father] the heathen pontiff Albinus, should be born – in answer to a mother's vows – a Christian granddaughter [the younger Paula]?"

Indeed: "Who could have believed...that a delighted grandfather should hear from the little one's faltering lips – Christ's Alleluia?! ... The unbeliever is sanctified by his holy and believing family [*cf.* First Corinthians 7:14]. For, when a man is surrounded by a believing crowd of children and grandchildren, he is as good as a candidate for the faith!

"I speak thus to you, Laeta..., to teach you not to depair of your father's salvation. My hope is that the same faith which has gained you your daughter, may win your father too – and that thus you may be able to rejoice over blessings bestowed upon your entire family.

"In answer to your prayers..., I [as a spiritual father] wish to address you as a mother – and to instruct you how to bring up our dear Paula [the younger] who has been consecrated to Christ before her birth and vowed to His service before her conception. Thus, in our day, we have seen repeated the story told us in the Prophets about Hannah who – though at first barren – afterward became fruitful....

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Samuel and Samson are both instances of this. So too is John the Baptizer who, when Mary came in, leaped for joy [Luke 1:41]....

"As Paula, then, has been born in answer to a promise – her parents should give her a training suitable to her birth. This is the way to educate a soul who is to be a temple of God. It must learn to hear nothing and to say nothing but what belongs to the fear of God....

"Above all, you must take care not to make her lessons distasteful to her. For a dislike for them, conceived in childhood, may continue into her maturer years.

"The very words which she tries bit by bit to put together and to pronounce, ought not to be chance ones – but names specially fixed upon and heaped together for the purpose. Those, for example, of the Prophets or the Apostles – or the list of Patriarchs from Adam downwards, as it is given by Matthew and Luke."

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Continuing his *Epistle to Laeta*, Jerome next added: "We read of Eli the priest that he became displeasing to God on account of the sins of his children [First Samuel 2:27-36]. And we are told that a man may not be made a bishop – if his sons are loose and disorderly [First Timothy 3:4].

"On the other hand, it is written of the woman that 'she shall be saved [or made happy] in bearing children – if they continue in faith and charity with holiness with chastity' [First Timothy 2:15]. If, then, parents are responsible for their children when these are of ripe age and independent – how much more must they be responsible for them when, still unweaned and weak, they cannot (in the Lord's words) 'discern between their right hand and their left' [Jonah 4:11]?"

"While the son is a child, and thinks as a child, and until he comes to years of discretion to choose between the two roads" – explained Jerome – "his parents are responsible for his actions, whether these be good or bad." In the younger Paula's case, "let it be her task daily to bring to you the flowers which she has culled from Scripture.... Let her take as her model some aged virgin of approved faith, character, and chastity – capable of instructing her by word and by example.

"She ought to rise while yet night, to recite prayers and psalms; to sing hymns, in the morning...; to take her place in the line of battle for Christ; and lastly to light her lamp and to offer her evening sacrifice.... Let her reading follow her prayer; and prayer again succeed the reading!

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"Let her treasures be not silks or gems but manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures! ... Let her begin by learning the Psalter, and then let her gather rules of life out of the Proverbs! ... From the Preacher [Ecclesiastes], let her gain the habit of despising the world and its vanities! Let her follow the example, set in Job, of virtue and patience.

"Then let her pass on to the Gospels – never to be laid aside! ... Let her also drink in with a willing heart the Acts of the Apostles – and the Epistles!

"As soon as she has enriched the storehouse of her mind with these treasures – let her commit to memory: the Prophets; the Heptateuch [Genesis through Judges]; the books of Kings and of Chronicles; [and] the rolls also of Ezra and Esther! When she has done all these – she may safely read the Song of Songs." However, "let her avoid all apocryphal writings!"

Further: "When you have weaned [the younger] Paula, as Isaac was weaned; and when you have clothed her, as Samuel was clothed – send her to her grandmother [the older Paula] and to her aunt [Laeta's sister-in-law Eustochium]! ... When Hannah had once offered in the tabernacle the son whom she had vowed to God, she never took him back....

"If you will only send Paula [the younger], I promise to be both a tutor and a fosterfather to her.... I shall instruct the handmaid and spouse of Christ who must one day be offered to her Lord in Heaven."²⁹⁵

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Gaudentius too had written to Jerome, asking for his advice as to the bringing up of his infant daughter. Among other things, Jerome answered this Christian brother as follows:

"Reward her for singing Psalms, so that she may love what she has to learn. Her task will then become a pleasure to her, and no compulsion will be necessary."

For the benefit of Gaudentius himself, Jerome then added the following statement. "You have some question, you say, to ask – concerning the Holy Scriptures. If so, ask it publicly – let your maids and your attendants hear it!"

This statement has clear implications as regards family worship. It would seem that Gaudentius had indeed been conducting daily studies of the Bible together with his own wife (*cf.* First Peter 3:7) – but alas, not also with the rest of his

²⁹⁵ *Epp.* 107f.

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household consisting also of several manservants and brothers (*cf.* Colossians 3:16 to 4:2).

So Jerome now sarcastically rebuked Gaudentius, as the head of that household, for this sin of omission. Such a household head, observed Jerome, "must be a 'fine' teacher...who thinks little of men [and] who does not care for the brothers – [but] who labours, in secret, merely to instruct just one weak woman!"

Getting back to the subject of the regular and continuous instruction of Gaudentius's daughter, Jerome then continued: "Her mother's nod should be to her as much a command as a spoken injunction. She should love her, as her parent; obey her, as her mistress; and reverence her, as her teacher.

"She is now a child without teeth and without ideas. But, as soon as she is seven years old, a blushing girl knowing what she ought not to say and hesitating as to what she ought – she should, until she is grown up, commit to memory the Psalter and the Books of Solomon. The Gospels, the Apostles, and the Prophets should be the treasure of her heart!"²⁹⁶

* * * * *

Elsewhere too,²⁹⁷ Jerome again implies the importance of daily family worship – where discussing the regular domestic devotions of married couples together. "The Apostle Peter had experience of the bonds of marriage," explained Jerome. "See how he fashions the Church, and what lesson he teaches Christians: 'you husbands..., keep on dwelling with your wives, according to knowledge!

"'Keep on giving honour to the woman, as unto the weaker vessel! Also keep on being joint-heirs of the grace of life – to the end that your prayers be not hindered!'" First Peter 3:7.

Continued Jerome: "I grant that...marriage is a gift of God... The Apostle Peter says: 'as heirs together of the manifold grace of God.'" First Peter 3:7, joined with 4:10.

"Noah was preserved at the deluge.... Noah, moreover, who was preserved as a kind of 'second root' for the human race, must of course be preserved together with his wife and sons.... The ark, according to the Apostle Peter, was a type of the Church – [the ark] in which eight souls were saved" (namely Noah and his entire family). First Peter 3:20.

²⁹⁶ *Ep.* 128:3a.

²⁹⁷ *Adv. Jov.*, 1:7f,17,22.

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"The Jews," Jerome ended, "gloried in children and child-bearing.... Blessed was he whose seed was in Zion, and his family in Jerusalem! And part of the highest blessing was: 'your wife shall be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts of your home; your children like olive-plants, round about your table!'" Psalm 128:3.

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Summarizing, then, many of the Early Church Fathers – in their own day and age – fully upheld the Old and New Testament practice of daily family worship. Thus, especially: Clement of Rome; the *Didache*; the *Epistle of Barnabas*; Ignatius; Justin Martyr; Irenaeus; Tertullian; Clement of Alexandria; Origen; Cyprian; the *Apostolic Constitutions*; Athanasius; Cyril; Gregory Nazianzen; Basil the Great; and Jerome of Bethlehem.

V

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP FROM CHRYSOSTOM TILL LUTHER

Even in the Late-Patristic Age – in spite of the rise and spread of monasticism and celibacy – daily family worship was still considered valuable. This continued to be the case, also after the beginning of the early mediaeval period subsequent to the fall of the Western Roman Empire to Odoacer's barbarians in A.D. 476.

Monasteries like those in the Non-Romish British Isles included groups of married clergy together with their wives and children. In such Proto-Protestant Celto-Brythonic and Celto-Irish institutions – erected both to promote learning and to protect Christians against attacks by Pagans – the family (and its extension the clan) flourished till the eleventh century.

Even in the Roman Church, daily family worship was practised among Christians – for several hundred years. This continued at least until some time after the Bishop of Rome was first called sole 'Pope' or 'Father' – in the days of Gregory the Great around 600 A.D.

We appropriately start this chapter on Late-Patristic family worship with the testimony of John Chrysostom of Constantinople. For, as he indicated in his *Sixth Homily on Genesis*, every house should be a church – and every head of a family a spiritual shepherd, who must give account even for his children and servants. Compare Genesis 1:26f; 2:23f; 3:15f; 4:2f; 4:26; 5:18f; 6:18f; 7:1f; 8:16f; 9:1-7f; 12:3-7f; 17:9-12f; 18:18-19; *etc.*

Chrysostom wrote his various works from about the year 380 and until the time of his death in 407 A.D. He had grown up as the son of a godly mother who had been widowed ever since the age of twenty. Doubtless she had been godly also in her daily family devotions, both before and during her widowhood. Indeed, when she was forty, a sophist who knew her exclaimed: 'Heavens! What women there are amongst the Christians!'²⁹⁸

Rightly did Chrysostom himself then add: "Being aware of all this, the blessed Paul said: 'Do not let a widow be enrolled [into Church Office as a Deaconess] under sixty years of age!'" First Timothy 5:9 *cf.* 3:11. Indeed, Paul also "mentions some additional requisites – 'well reported of for good works; if she has brought up children...'; if she has followed every good work diligently.'" First Timothy 5:10.

²⁹⁸ *Ep. to a Young Wid.*

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Added Chrysostom: "Heavens! What testing and scrutiny! How much virtue does he [Paul] demand from the widow! And how precisely does he define it – which he would not have done, had he not intended to entrust to her a position of honour and dignity.... 'Refuse the younger widows,' he says, for this Church Office! Instead, Paul wants these 'younger women' to 'marry; bear children; [and] guide the house' (alias look after their own households).

Different, however, is "she who is a widow indeed." First Timothy 5:5a. By this expression, both Paul and Chrysostom meant an older widow.

They meant one who has finished raising and training her children successfully in the ways of the Lord. They were therefore here envisaging somebody who has no likelihood whatsoever of remarrying – and/or of then bearing, and needing to rear – any additional children of her own.

Only such a latter kind of widow is a suitable candidate for this type of Church Office. For she "has set her hope upon God – and continues in prayers and supplications, day and night." First Timothy 5:5b. Indeed, she had been doing precisely that at daily family worship – throughout her previous marriage, and also ever since.

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Chrysostom also²⁹⁹ boldly enjoined the recalcitrant Christians in the Church of Antioch to 'reform' themselves. They should do so, he said, by instituting daily family worship – and by regularly discussing the Word of God even in their homes and together with their entire households.

Declared Chrysostom to the heads of households while they all were met for worship in the congregation: "When you go home, therefore, discourse about all these things with those who are in your home.... Departing from here – take an exhortation [like a bunch of 'roses'] – home to your wife; to your children; and to all your household....

"These 'roses' never wither; these fruits never drop off; these dainties never corrupt!" They offer "a lasting advantage – not only after this 'reformation' has taken place, but also in the very act of reforming. For think what a good practice this would be" – namely "to discourse only about the divine Laws; continually; at the table!" Deuteronomy 6:7.

Chrysostom then concluded this thought on the following solemn note: "Let us tell these things also to our children; and transmit them to the remotest

²⁹⁹ *De Stat.*, I:1 & VI:18.

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generations!" For "God has provided many other instructors for us, besides [just our own] conscience – viz. fathers for children; masters for servants; husbands for wives; teachers for pupils....

Thus, fathers and teachers take the young in hand, and bring them into order.... Wives have their husbands [to teach them].... Do neither father nor teacher...make you fear?"

Of course they do! For all godly teachers – whether husbands, fathers or schoolmasters – inculcate the fear of God alias respect for the Lord into those whom they teach.

So "let us never fail to thank God continually," also for our teachers! Said Chrysostom: "All these things, according to the prophetic saying [of Joel 1:3] – 'you must declare to your children; and let your children tell their children; and [let] their children again [tell] another generation!'"³⁰⁰

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Christ's disciples should avoid the 'shipwrecking' of their Christian testimony at home. They should do this – by practising daily family worship even in their homes.

Remarked Chrysostom:³⁰¹ "Moses said, 'whenever you have eaten and drunk and are full – remember the Lord your God!'" Deuteronomy 32:15 LXX. "Therefore, to put an end to these 'shipwrecks' – let us bring that hymn [Deuteronomy 32:15] before us, and unfold it all!

"In this way, seeing the profit of it – may we too chant it constantly over our table! ... Straightaway, fulfil the apostolic law which commands: 'whatsoever we do in word or in deed – do it in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him!'" Colossians 3:17. For this should be done – at home, and every day. Colossians 3:16-21 cf. 4:2.

Now this 'thanksgiving' by all Christians "takes place not for that one day only – but for all their life. For, observed Chrysostom, it is said: 'Who feeds me from my youth onward?'" And we should answer every day: "It is God Who feeds!"

However, God is a mighty and a generous king. Indeed, God is **the** King – *par excellence*! As Chrysostom explained, it is "upon the King's promise to furnish

³⁰⁰ *Ib.*, XII:2; XIII:10f; XXI:20.

³⁰¹ *Hom. 55 on Gosp. of Matt.*

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your daily food out of His own stores – that you should be of good hope for the future."

This, observed Chrysostom, is what Christians should believe. "Yes, and it is for this very reason that they speak like this – so that they may persuade both themselves and those who are made disciples by them to put off all worldly care.... Then, not to have you suppose that it is only for themselves that they keep on offering up this thanksgiving, they further say" – namely say to God – that 'You keep on giving food to all flesh.'

Indeed, in this way they "keep on giving thanks on behalf of the whole World. And, as fathers of the whole Earth, they keep on offering up their praises for all – and keep on training themselves to a sincere brotherly love.... See how they keep on fulfilling that Word of the Gospel which says: 'Keep on giving us, today, our daily bread!'"

Now Chrysostom apparently assumed³⁰² that also Timothy had been raised subject to such daily family worship. For he wrote that as Paul went through the cities of what is now Turkey, he met a young "**disciple** by the name of Timothy – who had a good report from the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium." Acts 15:41 & 16:1f and Second Timothy 1:5 & 3:14f.

"Great was the grace in Timothy!" – exclaimed Chrysostom. When Barnabas departed [Acts 15:39f], Paul "finds another [Timothy], equivalent to him" (Barnabas). "Of him [Timothy], Paul says: 'I remember...your unfeigned faith which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice.'" Second Timothy 1:5. Consequently, Paul reminds Timothy that the latter had "known the Holy Scriptures from childhood." Second Timothy 3:15.

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Chrysostom elaborated on family worship especially with reference to Paul's injunction to Christians everywhere: 'you fathers, do not keep on provoking your children to anger! But do keep on nurturing them in the education and the admonition of the Lord! Ephesians 6:1-4 cf. 1:1.

Discussing this, Chrysostom wrote³⁰³ to his own readers: "You see that where there are spiritual ties, the natural ties will follow. Do you wish your son to be obedient? From the very first: 'bring him up in the education and admonition of the Lord!' Never deem it an unnecessary thing that he should be a diligent hearer

³⁰² Hom. 34 on Acts of Apost.

³⁰³ Hom. 21 on Eph.

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of the Divine Scriptures! For there, the first thing he hears, will be this: 'honour your father and your mother!'"

"This," Chrysostom explained to all Christian fathers, "concerns you!" As regards the education of one's own children – "never say this is the business of the monks! Am I making a monk of him? No! There is no need he should become a monk.... Make him a Christian!"

Rather than making one's children into monks, one should heed Paul. "Let us listen to this blessed Apostle's admonition! 'Let us bring them up in the education and admonition of the Lord!' Let us give them a pattern! Let us make them, from the earliest age, apply themselves to the reading of the Scriptures!"

Chrysostom continued: "Imitate those of old! Especially you women – emulate those admirable women [of old]! Has anyone given birth to a child? Imitate Hannah's example (First Samuel 1:24). Look at what she did [with her young child Samuel]! She put him into the hands of God.... Not even [the priest] Eli himself was one of those in any great degree qualified to shape him up. How could he be? He who was not able to shape up even his own children!" First Samuel 2:22f & 2:27f & 4:15f.

"No! It was the faith of the mother [Hannah] and her earnest zeal that wrought the whole.... She did not say: 'I will wait till the child has grown up – so that he may [then first] have a taste of the things of this life!' ... No, all these thoughts the woman repudiated.

"She was absorbed in one object: how from the very beginning she might dedicate [her son Samuel], the spiritual image [of God] – to God.... Therefore was her married state more glorious.... She dedicated the first-fruits to God. Therefore was her womb fruitful, and she obtained other children besides." First Samuel 2:21.

Chrysostom concluded: "Let everything [else] be secondary with us – to the provident care we should take of our children, and to our 'bringing them up in the education and admonition of the Lord!' ... Let this be our task – to mould and to direct both ourselves and them according to what is right! Otherwise – with what sort of boldness shall we stand before the judgment seat of Christ?"

"If a man who has unruly children, is unworthy to be an Overseer (Titus 1:6) – much more is he unworthy of the Kingdom of Heaven! What do you say? If we have an unruly wife, or unruly children – shall we have to render account? Yes, we shall! ... Let us therefore entertain great solicitude for our wives – and take great care of our children!"

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Elsewhere too,³⁰⁴ Chrysostom added: "We pray for the living.... Job offered sacrifices for his children.... 'It may be,' said he, 'that they have denied God in their hearts!' Job 1:5." "This Job did continually' or 'all the days.'

"Thus does one provide for one's children" – explained Chrysostom. "In Gospel times, even men that were handicraftsmen – poor; having wives; bringing up children; ruling their families" – should do likewise, every day! "Since Christ too, when He gave us a form of prayer, inserted this in the prayer when He taught us to say: 'Give us this day our daily bread!'" See in Matthew 6:11.

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God is angered also, explained Chrysostom,³⁰⁵ by the lack of regular family worship. "This reproach God spake against the Jews – 'borne from the belly, and instructed even to old age.'" Isaiah 46:3f LXX. "If you had not always been expecting this – all things would not have gone backward in this manner."

Now the husband and father is the 'head' of the 'body' of his wife and his children. Accordingly, declared Chrysostom, "before the 'head' is set right – it is superfluous to proceed to the rest of the body."

Those 'heads' Chrysostom then rebuked. He chastised them as follows: "You throw everything upon us [Ministers of the Word]! You ought to learn from us – but your wives from you; [and] your children from you! But [instead, and wrongly so] – you leave all to us [Ministers of the Word]! That is why our toil is excessive.... Now, your children will utter songs and dances of Satan....

"Whatsoever soil the plant stands in, such is the fruit it bears. If in a sandy and salty soil [alias uncultivated parents] – of like nature is its fruit. However, if the plant [alias the child] stands in "sweet and rich" soil [alias in godly parents who conduct regular family worship] – "of like nature is its fruit" in that case too.

"So, the matter of instruction is a sort of fountain. Teach him [the child] to sing those Psalms which are so full of the love of wisdom! ... When, in these, you have led him on from childhood – by little and little, you will lead him forward even to higher things. The Psalms [indeed] contain all things" useful for the child to learn.

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³⁰⁴ *Homs. 3 & 15 on Philipp.*

³⁰⁵ *Hom. 9 on Col.*

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On the other hand, Chrysostom explained elsewhere,³⁰⁶ "the children of a father who is dead are not equally illustrious" to those whose fathers are still alive. With children whose father is dead, much then depends on the godliness or not of the surviving widow. Indeed, if the mother is a godly widow, the children will get a better education than they would have received from even a living father who is generous and wealthy but not godly.

Chrysostom himself had been raised by a godly widowed mother. Well could he then encourage any other widowed mother, in respect of her education of her own minor children. Thus he assured every such widowed mother regarding her minor children: "If you bring them up from their first youth as they ought to be brought up, they will enjoy an advantage much greater than a father's protection. For that is the business of widows – I speak of the bringing up of children.... First Timothy 5:10."

However, such is the business also of any married woman. Chrysostom insisted: "Hear Paul saying...'she shall be saved through rearing children' – he has not said through her husband – 'if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.' First Timothy 2:15. Instil into them the fear of God from their first youth – and, better than any father, He will protect them."

Normally, however, both parents should expect to survive till old age. Wrote Chrysostom:³⁰⁷ "God has given you children – so that they may support your old age; [and] so that they may learn virtue from you. For God, on this account, has willed that mankind should be held together like this, to provide for two most important objects – on the one hand, appointing fathers to be teachers; and on the other, implanting great love."

Therefore, "when we receive children from the nurse – let us not accustom them to old wives' stories; but let them learn from their first youth [alias their own very youngest days] that there is a judgment – [and] that there is a punishment! Let it be fixed into their minds! This fear, being rooted in them, produces great good effects.... By these discourses, let us regulate ourselves – as well as also our wives; our servants; our children!"

Paul had advised Timothy to instruct both fathers and mothers to give a Christian education to their children, regularly and constantly. On this, Chrysostom remarked:³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ *Hom. 6 on 1st Thess.*

³⁰⁷ *Hom. 10 on 1st Thess.; & Hom. 2 on 2nd Thess.*

³⁰⁸ *Hom. 9 on 1st Tim.*

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"You women, do not be cast down! ... God has granted you another opportunity of happiness – by bringing up children, so that you are made happy not only by yourselves but also by others.... After child-rearing, they [the women] keep them [the children] in charity and purity. By these means, they [the women] will have no small reward on their account – because they have trained up wrestlers for the service of Christ."

Consequently, "fathers may be benefitted by the virtue of their children – and mothers also – when they have brought them up well.... Hear this, you fathers and mothers, so that your bringing up of children shall not lose its reward!

"This also he [Paul] says, as he proceeds." Thus that Apostle declares that a widow too is "'well-reported of for good works, if she has brought up children.' First Timothy 5:10..."

"Listen to this, you fathers! Bring your children up with great care, 'in the education and admonition of the Lord!' Ephesians 6:4.... Let us [parents] admonish them about these things! ... In children, we have a great charge committed to us. Let us bestow great care upon them!"

Chrysostom also urged: "Mothers..., regulate especially your daughters well! ... If you shape them in this way, you will make not only them happy, but also the husband who is destined to marry them; and not only the husband, but also the children; [and] not only the children, but also the grandchildren. For the root having being made good – good branches will shoot forth and become **still better!**" Psalm 119:99; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14.

"Let your sons be so modest, as to be distinguished for their being steadfast and sober – so that they may receive great praise from both God and men.... For thus they will be able to secure a good reward to their parents – so that all things will be done to the glory of God and for our happiness."

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Especially a candidate for Eldership within the Church, insists Paul, is to give regular Christian instruction to his own children. Indeed, he is to be 'one who keeps on ruling his own home well.' As regards this text, also Chrysostom observed:³⁰⁹ "Even those who are outside [the Church] say this."

Actually, "the Church is as it were a...[great] household." First Timothy 3:15 & Second Timothy 2:20. "As in a house there are children and wife and domestics, and the man has rule over them all – just so in the Church there are women;

³⁰⁹ *Hom. 10 on 1st Tim.*

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children; servants.... In fact, it is easier to rule the home. Therefore, he [Paul] asks: 'If a man does not know how to rule his own home – how shall he take care of the Church of God?!'"

In the case of Timothy, there was the blessed teaching at home of his godly mother and grandmother – while he was growing up. Hence the Apostle Paul could say with much confidence: 'from childhood, you have learned the Holy Scriptures.'" Second Timothy 3:15.

This brought Chrysostom to consider the role of godly married women, and also of widows, in the raising and training of children. For, explained Chrysostom,³¹⁰ "she who lives in pleasure is dead even while she lives.... If she does not provide for her own [children], she is worse than an infidel!" First Timothy 5:6-8.

"Truly, it is no unimportant work to bring up children. But bringing them up means not merely taking care of them. They must be brought up well." This is only so, "as he [Paul] said before: 'if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness.'" First Timothy 2:15.

Paul told also Titus to 'ordain Elders in every city'; but such Elders must all first have 'faithful children not accused of riot or unruliness.' Here, explained Chrysostom³¹¹ of Paul, "we should observe what care he bestows upon children. For he who is not able to be the instructor of his own children – 'how should he be the teacher of others?' If he cannot keep in order those whom he has had with him from the beginning – whom he has brought up, and over whom he had powers both by the laws and by nature – how will he be able to benefit those without" (alias those outside of his own family)?

"At the beginning" of the Christian Church, wrote Chrysostom, "it was permitted to men to teach both men and women" – in church and elsewhere. "To women," explained Paul, "it is allowed to instruct, by discourse, at home" – but not to instruct both men and women together, in church.

"Let each of the elder women, he means (Titus 2:4), teach all [women] who are younger...'to love their children'.... She who loves the root [her husband], will much more love the fruit [her children].... She who despises her husband, neglects also her home. But from love springs great soberness, and all contention is done away....

³¹⁰ *Ib.*, *Homs.* 8 & 10.

³¹¹ *Homs.* 2 & 4 on *Tit.*

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"He [Paul] who in everything would withdraw us from worldly concerns, here bestows his consideration upon domestic affairs. For when these are well conducted, there will be room for spiritual things – but otherwise, they too will be marred." Thus John Chrysostom of Constantinople.

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In his discussions on the deity of Christ and the doctrine of creation in John 1:1f, Chrysostom remarked³¹² to his readers: "Let nobody in the assembly then be thinking about domestic matters! But let him at home be stirring with what he heard in the assembly! ... For this house [*viz.* our home] is a spiritual surgery. There, we may heal whatever wounds we may have received outside – but not gather fresh ones to take with us hence" (alias from our own home)!

"Yet if we do not give heed to the Spirit speaking to us – we shall not only fail to clear ourselves of our former hurts, but shall get others in addition. Let us then, with much earnestness, attend to the Book as it is being unfolded to us.... If we learn exactly its first principles and fundamental doctrines," explained Chrysostom, "after labouring a little at the beginning – [we] shall be able, as Paul says, to instruct others also. Romans 15:4.

"It is necessary...that you continue...also when you are at home...[to] converse man with wife, and father with son, concerning these matters.... For let nobody tell me that our children ought not to be occupied with these things! They ought not only to be occupied with them; but to be zealous about them alone....

"Is it not a strange thing, that we should bid our domestics [to] serve us all their time – and ourselves apportion not even a little of our leisure to God? ... Do not so, brethren! Do not so! It is this very age that most of all needs for these things to be heard!"

For all, explained Chrysostom,³¹³ should teach God's Word to others in some way or other – at least during daily family worship. "Do not say: 'Why did I not have the gift of teaching?' – or 'I would have edified innumerable souls, if only I had that gift!'"

Chrysostom urged further: "Again, in speech, prove that you can use exhortation and counsel fitly! ... You have a child; you have a neighbour; you have a friend; you have kinsmen. And though publically before the Church you are not able to draw out a long discourse – you can exhort these [other persons] in private.

³¹²*Homs.* 2-3 on *John*.

³¹³*Hom.* 3 on *Heb*.

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"For – that every man can do this – hear what Paul says, how he charged even lay people! 'Edify,' he says, 'one another – as you are also doing!' First Thessalonians 5:11. And: 'comfort one another with these words!' First Thessalonians 4:18....

"Are you better than Moses? Hear how he shrinks from the hardship! 'Am I,' he says, 'able to bear them? For You have said to me [Numbers 11:12], "Bear them up like a nurse would bear up an unweaned child!"' What did God then do? He took of His Spirit, and gave it to the others – showing that when Moses bare them, the gift was not his own, but from the Spirit."

It is clear, then, explained Chrysostom,³¹⁴ that the Scriptures are not a sacerdotal secret. To the contrary, they are intended to be read and to be discussed by all the people of God – even in their homes, during daily family worship.

For "they were written for our admonition'.... First Corinthians 10:11.... And again: 'All Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable.' Second Timothy 3:16 [cf. too verses 14-15]. And: 'Let the Word of Christ keep on dwelling in you richly!' Colossians 3:16" – cf. too 3:17-21 & 4:2. Indeed, the righteous man "shall keep on meditating in His Law day and night.' Psalm 1:2....

"Moses says [of God's Commandments]: 'You must keep on meditating on them continually – when you rise up; when you sit; when you lie down!' Deuteronomy 6:7.... Let us, I beseech you, 'keep on ministering to the saints!'" Hebrews 6:10. "For every believer is a saint – in that he is a believer."

Nowhere is this more clearly seen, than precisely in the influence of daily family worship at home – even to the enrichment of unbelieving members of the household. For, concluded Chrysostom, even "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife – and the unbelieving wife by the husband.' First Corinthians 7:14."

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Now John Chrysostom was outlived by Augustine of Hippo. The latter died in 430 A.D. That greatest theologian of the Early Church, uttered very many interesting statements – even about his parents' home life.

Some such statements bear also upon the subject of daily family worship. In that regard especially the following remarks of St. Augustine should be noted:

³¹⁴ *Ib.*, *Homs.* 8 & 10.

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"O Lord my God! ... **When** I came hither into this...life...I **heard** from my **parents** from whose substance You formed me...[that] Your merciful comforts sustained me.... For neither my mother nor my nurses filled their own breasts. But by them You gave me the nourishment of infancy, according to Your ordinance....

"As a boy, I began to pray to You, my 'Help' and my 'Refuge'.... My elders laughed – yes, and my parents too, who wished me no ill.... And yet I erred, O Lord God..., in doing contrary to the wishes of my parents.... I disobeyed them."³¹⁵

In his "sixteenth year," while residing with his parents, Augustine's mother prayed earnestly for him.³¹⁶ Much later, he ascribed his really effective conversion under God from a life of sordid sin unto Christ – "to the faithful and daily tears" of that godly woman.³¹⁷

Wrote Augustine at that later time: "You sent Your hand from above, and drew my soul out of that profound darkness – when my mother, Your faithful one, wept to You on my behalf more than mothers are wont to weep [even after] the bodily deaths of their children.... I confess to You, O Lord" – continued Augustine – "that she was not disquieted...before she spake.... And her prayers entered into Your presence."³¹⁸ Praise God for those constant daily prayers of his mother Monica, for the salvation of her son!

Augustine described³¹⁹ the way his godly mother prayed to the Lord, as follows. "Modestly and soberly trained, and rather made subject by You to her parents than by her parents to You, when she arrived at a marriageable age she was given to a husband.... She busied herself to gain him for You, 'preaching' You to him by her behaviour.... She waited for Your mercy upon him....

"Finally she gained over to You her own husband, now towards the end of his earthly existence.... For she had 'been the wife of one man'; had requited her parents; had guided her house piously; was 'well-reported of for good works'; and had 'brought up children' – as, often travailing..., she saw them swerving from You." Cf.: First Timothy 5:4,9,10,14 & Galatians 4:19.

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³¹⁵ *Conf.* I:6:7 & 9:14 & 10:19.

³¹⁶ *Ib.*, II:3:6.

³¹⁷ *De don. persev.*, ch. 20.

³¹⁸ *Conf.* III:11:19f.

³¹⁹ *Ib.*, IX:9:19,21.

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After his own conversion in acknowledging Christ's Lordship, Augustine endorsed the Fifth Commandment.³²⁰ He saw the 'Our Father' as a model daily prayer.³²¹ Indeed, he stressed the desirability of home prayers by husband and wife together.³²²

He also wrote to "Juliana" the widow – 'the religious handmaiden of God' – to remind her as a Christian to "'persevere in prayers night and day'" [First Timothy 5:5f]. He even assured her: "You have sons.... You are...to be praised...because you are zealous to nurture and educate them piously.... Let men congratulate you!"³²³

Stated Augustine,³²⁴ while urging daily family worship: "Whenever you eat and drink, sing a psalm! ... After food and drink, you lie down to sleep.... Give honour to your wife! For you are both members of Christ; both made by Him; both renewed by His blood. By so doing, you praise God. Nor will your praise be silent altogether." First Peter 3:7.

There is, then, also to the illustrious Augustine of Hippo-Regius, a kind of 'priesthood of all believers.' "Brethren," he said, "when you hear the Lord saying: 'where I am, there shall also My servant be!' [cf. Matthew 18:20] – do not think merely of good overseers and clergymen! But even you yourselves should serve Christ, in your own way – by...every father of a family also...acknowledging in this Name the affection he owes as a parent to his family!

Let him keep on warning and teaching and exhorting and correcting his whole household – for Christ's sake, and for the sake of life eternal! Let him keep on showing kindness, and keep on exercising discipline! Thus, in his own home, he will keep on serving Christ – and keep on filling an 'ecclesiastical' and a kind of 'episcopal' office [as 'overseer' of his own home].... Many who were neither bishops nor clergy...; many married persons both male and female; many fathers and mothers of families – have served Christ, even to the laying down of their lives in martyrdom for His sake!"³²⁵

³²⁰ *Ep.* 55:12:22 compare *De Ps.* 71:2 & 109:14.

³²¹ *Ench.*, ch. 71; *De Serm. Dom. in Mont. sec. Matt.*, II:27.

³²² *De Bon Conjug.* 14, compare *De Ps.* 147:2.

³²³ *De Bon. Vid.*, 1 & 18.

³²⁴ *De Ps.*, 147:2.

³²⁵ *De Evang. Joh.*, Tract. 52:13.

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Similarly, in his *Ninety-fourth Sermon*, Augustine insisted that "every man must be 'bishop' in his own home. He must see to it that his wife, his son, his daughter, his servant – since he is bought with so great a price – continues in the true faith. The apostle's doctrine has placed the master over the servant, and has bound the servant to obedience to the master. But Christ has paid a ransom for both."

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Now the Lord's Prayer is not only a series of petitions for use each day. It is also a daily family prayer. It teaches us, said Augustine, that "we ought daily to meditate" and to ask for "food necessary for the body.... We are to ask for...daily bread – both the bread necessary for the body...and the 'invisible' bread of the Word of God...."

"For He has said...: 'your Father knows that you have need of all these things'.... All who serve as soldiers, receive provisions and pay.... 'Take no thought for tomorrow; for the morrow,' says He, 'will be anxious for the things of itself'.... When you ought, you will take food or drink or clothing...."

"These things will be within reach, because our Father knows that we have need of all these things. For 'sufficient to the day,' says He, 'is the evil [or "trouble"] thereof'.... That is, necessity itself will urge us to take such things."³²⁶

Augustine went on:³²⁷ "When you say 'give us this day our daily bread' – you are professing yourself to be a beggar from God. Do not be ashamed at this! However rich any man may be on Earth, he is still God's beggar. The beggar takes his stand before the rich man's house. But the rich man himself stands before the door of the greater and richer One...."

"And what does the rich man need? I am bold to say: even the rich man needs daily bread.... This bread, dearly beloved – by which our body is filled; by which the flesh is recruited, day by day – this bread, I say, God gives...."

"Daily we live, and daily we rise; daily we are fed, and daily we hunger. May He then keep on giving us daily bread! ... As when Joseph invited his brothers: 'These men,' says he, 'will eat bread with me today' [Genesis 43:16 LXX].... For the faithful know what they receive; and good for them it is to receive that daily bread which is necessary for this present time...."

³²⁶ *De Serm. Dom. in Mont. sec. Matt.*, II:8:27 & II:17:56.

³²⁷ *Ser. in N.T. Less.*, 7:9f & 8:5 & 11:1 & 44:1.

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"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son keeps on asking for a fish – will keep on giving him a stone?" Matthew 7:7-10. "Or if he keeps on asking for an egg – will keep on offering him a scorpion?" Luke 11:12.

"If you then,' says He, 'though you are evil, do know how to keep on giving good gifts to your children – how much more shall your Father Who is in Heaven keep on giving good things to them that keep on asking Him!'" Matthew 7:11.

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Finally, Augustine saw some significance for daily family worship even in Matthew 25:24. That text has the unfaithful to say: 'Lord, I knew that You are a hard man, reaping where You have not sown' – in contrast to the other servants of the Lord who are faithful indeed. The latter are like the 'faithful and wise steward' or householder of Luke 12:42 – whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household, to give the members of that household their portion of food at the right time.

Such a wise householder is reminiscent also of the householder who expounds the Bible. Compare: Matthew 13:52. There, Jesus compares every 'scribe instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven' to a 'householder who brings forth new things and old things from out of his treasure.' Happy then is such a home – whose head, at daily family worship, shows and explains both new and old treasures from God's Word to his household every day!

In the light of the above, Augustine advised dissatisfied Christian 'laymen' not to wish that they were ecclesiastical 'clergy' – alias Overseers in the Church. Yet he indeed advised them, themselves, to act as God's 'clergy' [alias His 'clerks' or 'scribes'] not over the churches but instead in their own homes – and over their very own *kleeros* or inheritance or 'lot' (namely their own household).

See Acts 1:13-26 – and particularly the word "room" or *huperooion* in verse 13; the word "bishopric" or *episkopee* in verse 20; the word "ministry" or *diakonia* in verse 25; and the words "lots" and "lot" or *kleerous* and *kleeros* in verse 26. Compare too the words "upper room" in Acts 1:13f – with the words "church" in Acts 12:5 and "house of Mary" in Acts 12:12.

Speaking as an ecclesiastical 'clergyman' and on behalf of other ecclesiastical 'clergy' – Augustine appropriately warned dissatisfied 'laymen': "discharge our office in your own houses! It is from such that a 'Bishop' [alias an *Episcopos* or an 'Overseer' or a 'Superintendent'] is called – **thereafter**." That is to say, a 'Bishop' (corrupted from the word *Episcopos*) is one who has been called to serve God as an Overseer in the Church – **after** formerly first serving God as a 'bishop' or 'overseer' in his own home. See First Timothy 3:1-5 & Titus 1:5-11.

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Such a one has been called to superintend others in the Church – precisely because he previously superintended his own family, successfully, in his own home. Thus, explained Augustine, "he superintends [in the Church] – because he takes care and attends to others" in his own home, first!

"To every man, then, if he is the head of his own house, ought the office of the 'episcopate' to belong – to take care how his household believe, so that none of them fall into heresy: neither wife; nor son; nor daughter; nor even his slave." Thus Augustine.

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Sadly, however, with the influx and spread of semi-pagan sacerdotalism and unbiblical celibacy even in the Church – especially from the time of Augustine onward, monasticism now increased. This had great consequences. The duty of giving regular religious instruction to Christian children, was more and more removed from the daily family worship of the parents.

Such parents were thenceforth (quite wrongly) regarded as 'mere laymen.' Indeed, the duty of giving religious education to their own children – now began to devolve increasingly upon the largely childless monks and the increasingly-celibate priests.

Thus, the 430f A.D. Cassian, in his *Second Conference of Abbot Isaac*, transferred the Deuteronomy 6:6f injunctions from the Biblical family – to the unbiblical monasteries.³²⁸ Indeed, Gregory the Great – the first Bishop of Rome ever to be called (sole) 'Pope' – around A.D. 600 applied Biblical texts discussing the teaching function of natural fathers, to ecclesiastical clergy.

Thus Pope Gregory taught³²⁹ that "prelates" are to "preside" over their "subjects" – precisely in terms of Colossians 3:20! Indeed, those subjects, he added, must then "submit humbly" to their 'spiritual fathers' alias their prelatical "parents." For – explained Gregory – it is said: "Children, obey your parents!"

What had happened here, is that the ecclesiastical clergy had now become "fathers" and the nuns had become "mothers" – while the laity (even when parents) had become "children." In one word, the natural family had been downgraded.

This latter was reflected even in the new ecclesiastical liturgies. As the great Church Historian Kenneth Scott Latourette observes in his famous book A

³²⁸ Cf. ch. X.

³²⁹ *Reg. Past.* IV, adm. 5.

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History of Christianity:³³⁰ "When the congregation gathered, the men were on one side of the church and the women on the other. The clergy were in the apse, where was the altar. The youths were by themselves, sitting or standing. The older people were to sit, and the mothers with children had a special place."

With the mediaeval victory of sacramentalism, and especially with the sweeping victory of the erroneous theory of the baptismal regeneration particularly of babies – it can quite readily be seen how the religious education especially of such babies after their infant baptism, easily became a matter of relative unimportance. Especially with the exaltation of celibacy and the corresponding downgrading of marriage and child-rearing as such, Christian family worship increasingly became eclipsed by eccentric and ecclesiasticistic ritualism and sacerdotalism.

Only centuries later, after Europe's beginning of the printing of books and the resultant revival and rapid increase of Bible study – was the turning-point reached. For, after many centuries of Romanistic deformation, daily family worship was now once again about to be restored. Very significantly, this was then done not by Rome – but by the Protestant Reformation.

This is not to say that no families ever conducted household worship between the times of Gregory the Great and Martin Luther. Wealthy persons could always purchase handwritten copies of the Bible, and read them at household worship even to their servants and the latter's families. See Genesis 14:13-14 & 18:18-19.

From Augustine's mentor Ambrose of Milan, Bible-reading groups either fled or slowly gravitated northward into the fastnesses of the Italian Alps – even in spite of the rise of the Papacy. *Cf.* Revelation 12:6-17.

Spreading yet further northwards, some of the Bible-reading groups of 'Waldensians' moved into Moravia. There they used the Old Slavonic Bible – even from the ninth century onward. This provided the basis on which the later Jan Huss and his Bohemian Brethren could build.

In France, Waldo's so-called 'Poor Men' of Lyons circulated portions of Scripture. Romansch and Provencal translations were found already in the twelfth century – and used especially by the pastors and heads of families among the Waldensians.

Possibly to some extent under Waldensian influence, John Wycliffe's 1384 translation of the Bible into English certainly augured the arrival of the Pre-

³³⁰ San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1975 ed., I pp. 201f.

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Reformation. His Lollards in turn then stirred up not only many in England and Scotland, but also influenced even Huss and his Slavs in Moravia and Bohemia.

Even middle-class families could afford printed Bibles in their own vernacular, after the printing up of the *Gutenberg Bible* in 1452. Indeed, the *Waldensian Catechism* and the *Bohemian Catechism* both include appendices on 'Household Duties' – and the latter was used by Luther as a model for a similar appendix in his own *Short Catechism* of 1531.

* * * * *

In our first chapter above, we have already seen that Luther believed Adam and Eve held fast to the Word of God; gave thanks; and praised the Lord – even before the fall. Adam would have taught his children and his children's children, and offered household worship to the Triune God Jehovah Elohim especially in the evening – explained the great Protestant Reformer. Indeed, it was *inter alia* also to this kind of daily family worship – that the Lord Jesus Christ has restored Christians.

Thus the Bible-believing Martin Luther consistently wrote: "When we were made Christians...we were given the right and power also to...profess the Word we received from Him [Christ], before everybody – each one according to his station and calling. For, though we are not all in the public office and calling – still every Christian should and may teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, [and] reprove his neighbour with God's Word – whenever and wherever he finds someone in need of it.

"A father and mother ['should teach'] their children and servants.... For a Christian certainly can teach the other one who is still ignorant or weak – and admonish him with the Ten Commandments, the Creed, Prayers, *etc.* And he who hears it, is in duty bound to receive it from him as God's Word – and join in confessing it publically."³³¹

Declared the Lutheran theologian Dr. Francis Pieper in his *Christian Dogmatics*, the daily ministering "the Word by Christians in their homes...is God's order. This fact must be stressed unceasingly.

"Insofar as Christians fail to bear witness – they are forgetting their Christian calling and doing the Christian Church untold harm. There have been times – and such times may come again – when unbelief and false doctrine so overran

³³¹ On Ps. 110:4, *St. L.*, V:1038 (cited in Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*, St. Louis: Concordia, 1953 ed.), III p. 441.

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external Christendom, that orthodox Christians had to depend on the preaching of the Word in their homes.

"Of this, Luther says: 'It may happen that the World will become so utterly epicurean [or pleasure-mad], that we shall have no public ministry in all the World – and the preaching [in the churches] will be solely epicurean.... The Gospel will be preserved only in the homes, by the fathers.'³³²

Martin Luther then continued: "O, how perilous it is to be a father or a mother! ... Truly, the knowledge and fulfilment of the...Commandments depends altogether upon this Commandment: 'you shall honour your father and your mother!'

"Parents are commanded to teach them [all the Commandments] to their children. As Psalm 78 says: 'how strictly He has commanded our fathers that they should make known God's Commandments to their children – so that the generation to come might know and declare them to their children's children!'

"Parents..., by training their own children...to God's service, will indeed have both of their hands full of good works to do. Here (in Matthew 25:35) are the hungry, thirsty, naked, poor, imprisoned, and sick....

"See what great lessons are these! How many good works you have before you, in your home – with your child that needs all these things like a hungry, naked, poor, imprisoned, sick soul.

"O, what a blessed marriage and home – where such parents were to be found! Truly – it would be a real 'church'..., yes, a paradise!

"Of such, Psalm 128 says: 'Blessed are they that fear God and walk in His Commandments! You shall eat of the labour of your hands! Therefore you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you. Your wife shall be as a fruitful vine in your house, and your children shall be as the young scions of laden olive-trees around your table! Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord!'

"On the other hand, parents cannot earn eternal punishment in any way more easily – than by neglecting their own children in their own home, and not teaching them the things which have been spoken of above. The Lord will...at their death and in the day of judgment...require of them the children whom He entrusted to them!

³³²Pg. 449.

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"This is shown by that word of Christ, Luke 23: 'You daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me but for yourselves and for your children! The days are coming, in which they [other people] shall say: "Blessed are the wombs that never bare and the breasts which never suckled!" Why shall they lament – except because all their condemnation comes from their own children?'"³³³

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Martin Luther continued: "The command of God is seen in that He so frequently, through Moses, urges and enjoins parents to instruct their children [*cf.* Deuteronomy 6:6f].... It is said in Psalm 78: 'how straitly He commanded our fathers that they should give knowledge to their children and instruct their children's children!

"It is seen also in the...[Fifth] Commandment – in which He so urgently enjoins children to obey their parents – that He would even have disobedient children sentenced to death (Deuteronomy 5:16 *cf.* 21:28f).... For what other purpose do we older folk exist – than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young?

"The foolish youths cannot possibly instruct nor protect themselves. God has therefore entrusted them to us who are old and know by experience what is good for them. And He will compel us to render a strict account! Hence, Moses also commands (Deuteronomy 32:7): 'ask your father, and he will show you; [ask] your elders, and they will tell you!'"

God "has not given you children and the means to support them only so that you may do with them as you please, or train them for worldly glory. You have been commanded earnestly to raise them for God's service – or be eradicated completely, together with your children and everything else!

"Then, everything that you have spent on them will be lost. The [Second]... Commandment says: 'I visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.'"

* * * * *

"Christians," said Martin Luther, are to be "taught and directed in what they should believe.... This instruction or direction I know not how to put in a clearer or better way, than has been done since the beginning of Christendom and retained to our own day – namely in these three: the Ten Commandments; the Creeds; and the Our Father.

³³³ *Works*, Philadelphia: Holman, 1915, I pp. 250-56.

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"These three contain, simply and briefly, just about everything a Christian needs to know. This instruction must be given...daily, as may be needed, and repeated or read aloud evenings and mornings in the home for the children and the servants – if we want to train them as Christians.

"They should not merely learn to say the words by heart as heretofore. But with each part, they should be asked questions and give answers – [as to] what each part means, and how they understand it."³³⁴

Thus, Luther prescribed³³⁵ even 'Morning Prayers.' These show "how a father should teach his family how to bless itself in the morning."

Let us now look, suggests Rev. Professor T.M. Lindsay,³³⁶ at Luther's *Catechisms* (both the *Short* and the *Large*).³³⁷ Indeed, one should glance further also at a new and greatly-enlarged *Hymn Book* which he authored.

Here, it is likely that Luther – in preparing all three of the above-mentioned documents – had in view his own training when a child. He desired to give all children the means of receiving the same evangelical education which he had received from his own godly father and mother.

The *Short Catechism* revealed Luther at his best. He told pastors they must, above all, avoid the use of different texts or versions of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. "With the young," enjoined Luther, "always keep to one form... Teach them...word for word – so that they may repeat the words, and learn them by heart!"

Once the children know the words perfectly, the teacher may then proceed to explain. This is to be done gradually – question by question. Thus, the Second Commandment is not to be explained at all – until the First Commandment has been explained clearly, and understood properly.

Now Luther's *Short Catechism* was divided into six sections: 'The Ten Commandments'; 'The Creeds'; 'The Lord's Prayer'; 'The Sacrament of Holy Baptism'; 'How the Simple Folk should be Taught to Confess'; and 'The Sacrament of the Altar' [alias Holy Communion].

³³⁴ *Ib.*, IV pp. 108f & 144f.

³³⁵ *Ib.*, VI p. 174.

³³⁶ *Luther and the German Reformation*, Edinburgh: Clark, 1900, pp. 232-34.

³³⁷ M. Luther's *Short Cat.*, cited in Loehle's *Seed-Kernels of Prayer*, Noerdlingen: Beck, 1880, pp. 27f.

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The *Catechism* has two 'Appendices.' The first gives 'Prayers' for private use morning and evening, and 'Grace' before and after meals. The second appendix is a selection of pious thoughts, mostly in the language of Scripture.

Here are excerpts from the 'First Appendix' in Martin Luther's *Short Catechism*: "**How the master of the household should teach his household to commend themselves to God both night and morning**.... In the morning, when you rise from your bed..., say – 'In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen!' ... Then, kneeling or standing, repeat...the Lord's Prayer.... Then go joyfully to your work and sing...a hymn, the Ten Commandments, or whatever else your devotion suggests.

"At night, when you go to bed..., say...the Lord's Prayer.... The master of the house should teach his household.... The children and the servants are to...speak modestly with folded hands: 'give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious and His mercy endures for ever!' ... 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself; in this saying, all Commandments are comprehended' (Romans 13).

"I exhort therefore that – first of all – supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men' (First Timothy 2)."

"'Let each one learn his lesson well; then, in the house, content will dwell!'" Here, also the original German rhymes, and yet better:

*'Ein jeder lernt sein Lection;
so wird es wohl, im Hause, stohn!'*

After Martin Luther's *Short Catechism* had been understood thoroughly, explains Professor Lindsay, then the *Large Catechism* was to be gone through in the same way. The *Large Catechism* repeated the thoughts of Luther's *Short Catechism*. It did so, however, at seven times the length.

It is very significant that Dr. Martin Luther, in his *Thesaurus*,³³⁸ insisted: "The father of every household is obligated to teach his child and his family.... For within his household, he is like a preacher or superintendent over his family.... He is enjoined to see that it learns – and to answer for this...lest your prayers be hindered' [First Peter 3:7]....

"For then, you cannot pray and say: 'Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive!'" Nor: 'Give us, today, our daily bread!'"

³³⁸M. Luther: *Thesaurus*, pp. 346 & 441.

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"With prayer, we fight against the devil. That is why we need to be in harmony with one another.... In that way, we shall all have the house over-abundantly full of good works at home!"

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Luther's own family life was quite exemplary. As Elizabeth Warren wrote³³⁹ in her book *The Story of Martin Luther*, he had six children. His great desire was to 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord' [Ephesians 6:4].

"I study the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer" – said Luther – "daily praying with my son John, and my daughter Magdalen." John [or 'Jonny'] was Luther's oldest child. Magdalen died when but a teenager.

When John was but four years old, according to Dr. Barnas Sears's biography *Luther*,³⁴⁰ the then-itinerant great Protestant Reformer wrote to him from Coburg: "Grace and peace in Christ, my darling little son! I am glad to see that you study and pray diligently. Go on doing so, my Jonny; and when I come home, I will bring with me some fine things for you."

"I know of a beautiful, pleasant garden – where many children go.... I asked the Owner of the garden, 'Whose children they were?' He replied: 'They are children who love to pray and learn – and are good!'"

"I then said: 'Dear Sir! I too have a son, whose name is Jonny Luther. May he too not come into the garden? ... The Man said: 'If he loves to pray and learn and is good, he shall come into the garden – and also Philly and Jussy [alias Luther's henchmen's sons Philip Melanchthon Jr. and Justus Jonas Jr.].... Go and write to him so!'"

"Therefore, my dear little Jonny, learn and pray well.... Tell Philly and Jussy to learn and pray too! And then you may all come together into the garden" – the 'Garden of the Lord.' So "now, I commend you to God. Greet Aunt Lene, and give her a kiss for me. Your dear father, Martin Luther." Thus Rev. Dr. Barnas Sears, in his great biography on Luther's spiritual life.

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"Train up a child in the way he should go; and, when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6. Elizabeth Warren's biography of Luther shows that he experienced the truth of these words in a truly remarkable way.

³³⁹London: Shaw, n.d., pp. 212f.

³⁴⁰B. Sears: *Luther*, London: Relig. Tract Soc., n.d., pp. 338f.

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When his daughter Magdalen (alias Madeline) was fourteen years old, she became very ill. Luther then said with tears in his eyes: "My dear little daughter! My dear Madeline! Will you remain willingly with your father here – or will you go willingly home, to please your other Father?"

She replied: "Yes, my dear father, as God pleases!" When little Madeline was in agony, and was breathing nearly her last, her father read to her this passage from Isaiah 26: 'your dead shall live; together with my dead body, they shall arise!'

She expired in his arms. When they put her into the coffin, he said: "Poor dear little Madeline! Look at you now!" Again he looked at her, and said: "You will rise again!"

Luther's biographer Dr. Sears explained that the great German Reformer was accustomed to moralize also over the sports of his children. One day, as Luther's fourth child Marty was playing with the dog, the father exclaimed: "This boy 'preaches' God's Word by his deeds and acts! For God says [in Genesis 1:26]: 'Have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the beasts of the field!' See how the dog puts up with everything from him!"

At another time, Martin Luther even joined in with his son's amusements. Philosophically, the father then observed: "Such was our state in Paradise – simple and upright; without guile or hypocrisy!"

Lutherans have recommended³⁴¹ model daily family worship services for the entire 'Christian Week.' Here, each day has its own format for 'Morning Worship Services' and 'Evening Worship Services.' The morning service format consists of: 1, Morning Hymn; 2, Psalmody; 3, Scripture Readings; and 4, Prayer. And the evening service format consists of 1, Psalmody; 2, Scripture Readings; 3, Hymn; and 4, Prayer.

The suggested Scripture Readings are excerpted from: a, Isaiah; b, the Pauline Epistles; c, the Heptateuch (Genesis through Judges) and Ruth; d, Jeremiah and Lamentations; and e, the Four Gospels. Also included are: f, Acts and Revelation; g, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, and First and Second Chronicles; h, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon; i, Job, Esther and Ezra; j, Other Books [such as Nehemiah *etc.*]; and k, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets.

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³⁴¹Loeche: *op. cit.*, pp. 67-80.

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We summarize. In this chapter, we have seen how daily family worship held its own even in the Late-Patristic days of Chrysostom and Augustine. Both of them were raised in godly homes, and often advised that this example be followed. It began to wane, however, with the increase of mediaeval monasticism – from the days of Cassian to Gregory of Rome.

Notwithstanding this, though besieged, it survived among the followers of Pietro Waldo in Italy and France; among John Wycliffe's Lollards in Britain; and also among Jan Huss and his Bohemians – even right down to the days of Martin Luther. The Waldensians circulated portions of Scripture which their heads of families used, and their *Catechism* appends 'Household Duties.' So too – under the influence of Wycliffe who took note of the Waldensians – did the Hussite *Bohemian Catechism* later used by Luther as a model for an appendix to his own *Short Catechism*.

Mercifully, in God's good providence, the latter great German Protestant Reformer greatly re-asserted this blessed practice – to the inestimable benefit of all who follow him. He declared that Adam and Eve had practised family worship, and that Christ had restored this. "Every Christian should and may teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, [and] reprove his neighbour with God's Word." Indeed, if the World yet becomes "so utterly epicurean that we shall have no public ministry" – added Martin Luther – "the Gospel will be preserved only in the homes."

Therefore: "Parents are commanded to teach...their children.... O, what a blessed marriage and home – where such parents were to be found! Truly – it would be a real 'church'..., yes, a paradise!" However: "Parents cannot earn eternal punishment...more easily than by neglecting their own children in their own home, and not teaching them the things which have been spoken of above. God will," warned Dr. Martin Luther, "at their death and in the day of judgment...require of them the children whom He entrusted to them!"

"For what other purpose do we older folk exist – than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young? ... God has entrusted them to us who are old.... He will compel us to render a strict account...."

"This instruction must be given...daily, as may be needed, and repeated or read aloud evenings and mornings in the home for the children and the servants." Thus Luther prescribed even 'Morning Prayers' – to show how a father should teach his family how to bless itself in the morning. Also his *Short Catechism* provided 'Appendices' helpful for masters of households to use at family prayers both morning and evening.

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Finally, we saw that Luther's own home life was quite exemplary. His great desire was to raise his children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Indeed, his extant letter to his little son Jonny, and his last words to his dying teenage daughter Madeline – clearly indicated that he did so faithfully, right down throughout their childhood years.

VI

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP: JOHN CALVIN (PART ONE)

Without Martin Luther as his immediate fore-runner, John Calvin could never have helped instruct God's people as well as he did. Yet Calvin himself re-discovered also other Biblical truths that Luther had not so clearly seen.

Nowhere is this more evident, than in the doctrine of the covenant. The implications of this for daily family worship, should be obvious.

Unlike Luther, the great Presbyterian Reformer John Calvin refrained from suggesting a fixed format either for preaching or for household devotions. He preferred to leave it to the Holy Spirit Himself, directly to lead each family as to its own form of daily household worship – also as to the portions of Scripture each particular family would consider suitable for its own devotional needs.

Calvin himself – from one weekly public worship service to the next – usually preached from Bible passages in their chronological order. This is also a most useful way to go through the Bible at family worship. Indeed, Calvin would seem to have implied that this could be done to great advantage.

As regards Calvin's teaching on antediluvian family worship in the households of Adam, Seth, Enos, Enoch and Noah – we would again refer to the short citations from his writings already given, back in our own first chapter. There, we saw he claimed that Adam was the 'father of the earthly family' who would lead at regular worship especially in the morning – and in accordance with the Law. We further saw, according to Calvin: that Cain and Abel were well-instructed by their father; that Adam and Eve and other of their children (the Sethites) later continued to worship God aright; and that also Noah met together with his family to worship God at frequent intervals.

Here in this present chapter, we commence our study with some observations about Calvin's understanding of postdiluvian household devotions until the death of Jesus. First of all, we shall take a good look at Calvin's views anent the daily family worship practices of Job.

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Especially Calvin's sermons on Job should be given special study in this regard. There, his explanations of Job 1:1-5 & 29:5 & 31:33 & 38:4-7 & 42:7-17 (and also of James 5:7-18) are of special importance. Below, we shall deal at

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length with all that Calvin preached and recorded about these texts – as regards their relevance to daily family worship.

In Job 1:1-5, the Scriptures state: 'There was...a man named Job, perfect and upright, and one who feared God.... There were born to him seven sons and three daughters.... His sons went and feasted in their houses.... When the days of their feasting were gone about, Job sent and sanctified them and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings.... For Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned.'"

In Calvin's sermons,³⁴² he said of the above: "The story here written, shows us how we be in God's hand.... It is our duty to submit ourselves unto Him with all humbleness and obedience.... He says that Job 'feared God.' He means to set out the religion that was in him....

"Hereby, we are warned that if we will frame our life aright – we must first have an eye to God and then to our neighbours.... Here under this 'fearing of God' all religion is comprehended – that is, to wit, all the service and honour which the creatures owe to their God....

"It was an incomparable virtue in Job, to bear patiently God's taking away of all the things which He had put into his hand. And it is very well declared also, how his children behaved themselves, and how he himself also on his part governed them in the fear of God....

"Behold the good agreement and love that was among Job's children, and specially how they exercised themselves continually therein – to the end they would not give any occasion of evil mistrust one to another! For the feasts that they made, were to none other end but to yield record of their brotherliness and agreement....

"Good agreement and friendship among men, and specially among brethren, is as pleasant a thing unto God as any can be. We hear how it is said in the Psalm (133): 'It is a joyful thing when brethren agree'.... God loves peace and amity among men and, above all things, among brethren....

"When a husband loves his wife, or when a father loves his children – they be good, holy and commendable things.... God has ordained that the man shall love his wife.... Ephesians 5 & 6; Colossians 3:19f; First Peter 3:7.

³⁴²J. Calvin: *Sermons on Job*, London: Geo. Bishop, 1574, Banner of Truth rep., pp. 1f.

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"Job thought in himself that his children might have offended God in the thing that of itself was good and commendable.... Therefore he took good heed to himself, and sanctified his children."

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Calvin continued: "We may take the more heed to ourselves that when we eat and drink one with another, we confess ourselves always sinners for offending God thereby.... When we be set at the table to drink and to eat, let us pray unto God, beseeching Him of His gracious goodness to keep us in such sobriety that – being nourished by His gifts – we may be the better disposed to serve Him...."

"Let us then consider how we ought to behave ourselves.... When we be at the table, let us feed for our repast in such a way as if God Himself dieted us.... Let us look up unto God Who shows Himself a father towards us, and has witnessed to us that we be His children...."

"St. Paul says that whether we drink or whether we eat, we must do it altogether in the Name of God. First Corinthians 10:31. There are many who suppose that there should be no thinking upon God when men come to eating and drinking – whereas in very deed we should therefore think so much the more about God. Colossians 3:17f.

"Seeing that God gives such virtue to bread by His Word, that we be sustained by it – will He not have us to acknowledge His presence, and how He has His hand stretched out over us? So then, it is rather a cause that we should think the more upon God! For we see that our eating and drinking are sanctified by yielding all honour to His Name. First Timothy 4:5. And therefore, when it comes to saying of grace – let us acknowledge that some fault may have escaped us! ... Then will God surely forgive us all our misdoing – if so be that we repair to Him.

"Thus you see the cause why it is said here precisely, that when Job's children had made an end of feasting each other by turns – Job commanded them to sanctify themselves.... We see then that Job...goes to the remedy.... Albeit, says he, that my children have not done their duty in all points – yet am I sure that God will have pity both upon them and upon me! And therefore let us ask Him forgiveness!"

Calvin went on: "Let us mark that Job in commanding his children to sanctify themselves, has showed the manner of the upbringing which he gave them in their childhood – that is, to wit, to serve God.... It is said that he commanded them to sanctify themselves – which thing would have been in vain and unavailable for him to do, had they not been taught long before how they ought

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to walk in the fear of God. And although they were as then grown up, and every one of them had a house of his own and kept a table by himself – yet, notwithstanding, Job did not cease to keep them continually under some awe.

"Behold here a doctrine very profitable for us – which is, that parents must so guide their children, as God may be honoured by them all. And it behooves us to mark this doctrine.... See here the respect that fathers have, in their desire to have their children brought up! But where is there a man to be found so well advised or bent to such simplicity as to say, 'It is enough for me that my child serve God; for I am sure that God will bless him and make him to prosper, and although he be poor toward the World – it is enough for me that God is his Father!'

"Now God will also render such reward to the fathers as they have deserved.... Therefore, so much the more does it behoove us to mark well the doctrine which the Holy Ghost shows us here under the example of Job – that is, to wit, that fathers and mothers should hold their children in such awe, as they may cause them to serve God.... Although Job's children were grown to full years of discretion, yet nevertheless their father held them always as it were under awe – warning them to ask forgiveness from God when they had offended Him, and to purify themselves."

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Calvin continued: "It is meet that he who wishes to be honoured, should be honourable.... To wit, it is requisite that he should show cause why [he is to] be honoured. How then shall a father purchase for himself authority towards his children – to be obeyed by them and to keep them in fear? Even by having such a gratuity and stayedness in himself as his children ought to be ashamed to gainsay him or to stand against him in anything! But if the fathers shake off the fear of God, how can it be that their children should obey them – since that they themselves do not yield God the honour that belongs to Him?

"See here the cause why children show themselves so loth to be corrected, and why they cannot be kept in awe – namely, for that their fathers are disobedient unto God! And so it is, that both the fathers and the children are condemned here – the fathers for their negligence in not taking heed to bring up their children in the fear of God, and the children for not suffering themselves to be governed by their fathers....

"Here they have a goodly example. For it is spoken of such as may say, 'my father held me in awe while I was young'....

"Job's children...might have said so. But we see that although they had come to have households of their own, yet they were still under the governance of their

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father. For in the text it is not said that they gainsaid anything that he commanded them, as was reported about the children of Eli (First Samuel 2:25) – but rather that they obeyed him, to the end they might be partakers of the sacrifices which he offered for them....

"The sacrifices that men offer to God without faith, deserve to be disliked.... Whensoever God gives more abundance of His Spirit unto us than to other men, we must look well to it that we make our neighbours partakers with us – so that such as have wisdom, give counsel to others; and so that such as have abundance, succour such as have need of it.

"See here how we ought to frame ourselves to that which is spoken about Job – namely that he offered sacrifices according to the number of his children. As for the residue, whereas it is said that Job sacrificed for his children – it is to show us that such as have charge of others must be watchful....

"God does men great honour when He gives [to men] those whom He has created after His own image, unto them to be their underlings. But yet with all that, this honour carries a great bond [or obligation] with it – namely that such as have households to govern, must always be watchful. For if an offence be committed against God in any household – he that is the head and master of the house must think himself blameworthy. He must mourn before God as if he himself were the party that had done the deed."

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Very personally, John Calvin then exclaimed for himself: "I watch, both night and day! Although I exhort my children as well as also my menservants and my maidservants to serve God – yet it is impossible for me to do all that I ought to do. For I see my children offend; I see faults in my menservants and maidservants.... Although I take pains to instruct them, there are yet many things to be found fault with....

"I must show them such example as I would have them to follow. If fathers and masters that have children and servants under their hand, had this regard with them – things would be better ordered than they be....

"Let us mark well that which is said here – that Job sacrificed according to the number of his children.... Let us likewise take good advice to humble ourselves before God, and not only to ask Him forgiveness when mischief comes to pass – but also to prevent it, as much as is possible....

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"How? That parents hold their children short; that masters look well about them so that God be served and honoured by them; and that their homes be well ruled in all pureness so they may be as it were little churches....

"Job said: 'It may be that my children have sinned'.... Job always thought in himself: 'It is possible that my children have sinned'.... He knew that if his children did amiss – he himself should yield account for it.... Job feared lest his children had not blessed God as behooved them – or that they had not blessed Him at all."

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In Job 29:4f, we read that Job in the days of his youth had the secret of God upon his dwelling – 'when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me.' This refers back to the times of daily family worship – when the Almighty smiled upon Job, and surrounded him with sons and daughters within his home.

In his sermon on Job 29:4f, Calvin noted³⁴³ "that Job in the time of his youth had the providence of God also in his tent.... In that age, we see that men do so dispose themselves as they may be put to the doing of some service....

Lo[ok] what Job means. When it is the springtime of the year, we see how the blade that shall bear corn shoots forth and the vines begin to bud. Howbeit, as yet, there is nothing but hope. We see the meadows spring up with green grass. But in the later season, the cattle are fat and well fed – because they have had pasture, and the riches of the ground are gathered and laid up. Thus you see the time of abundance....

"Job meant to say: 'when I was in my riches...God had given me such great abundance of goods that they flowed into my house.' And afterwards he adds 'that the providence or company of God was upon his tent'.... The Hebrew word Job uses, signifies 'providence' or 'company.' Therefore [the meaning of it is:] when I had the providence of God upon my tent, that is to say, when God watched over me to guide all my affairs...or else when God kept me company...to hold me as it were in His lap....

³⁴³ *Ib.*, p. 491.

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"He still directs himself to God, and glorifies Him by confessing that the benefits which he had received in times past, fell not to him by casual adventure nor were purchased by his own travel and policy.... 'It is God (he says) Who has lit His lamp upon me. It is He Who has guided me'" – and guided also "my children" when they were yet "about me" and under my roof. Job 29:4-5. Needless to say, all this clearly implies also daily family worship.

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In Job 38:4-7, we are told God effectively asked that patriarch: 'Where were you when I laid down the foundations of the Earth...when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?' In his sermon on this passage, Calvin remarked:³⁴⁴ "By these words, God betokens that as soon as the stars were made – it was a set song or melody to glorify Him....

"Surely such melody ought of right to waken us, and to stir us up to sing the Lord's praise and to glorify Him! ... Behold, even the angels of Heaven are provoked to do so! ... It behooves us to apply this text to our instruction – to the end we may fare the better by it.

"It is said, in the first part [of Job 38:7], that the stars began to sing from their first creation.... It is said that the angels rejoiced at that sight.... Hereby, we ought to be moved to glorify our God.... Such a joy shall be a right and true joy....

"The angels of Heaven did as it were leap for joy, when they saw the excellent course and wonderful order of the Heaven by God's appointment.... Seeing that the angels do guide us to the glorifying of God and to the singing of praises unto Him – ought not we [also] to be glad, when we [too] behold the goodly order? ... The chief service which God requires of men, is to be praised at their hands....

"Our Lord...is contented that men should exalt Him and glorify Him...and that we should be moved to praise Him.... By the way, let us mark that the angels are termed God's children – to the end we should be the more persuaded to run to the triumph that is spoken of here, and join with them in triumphing out God's praises....

"The angels are surely the children of God. But we [humans] are also called thus – as well as they. Why so? Because God created us after His own image and likeness. And although this was defaced by the sin of Adam – yet was it repaired again in the chosen, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is the lively image of God.... We were so exalted by His Spirit, so as now to be set in our former state again....

³⁴⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 695f.

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"Seeing it is so, let us mark that God shows us in this text after what sort we may be sure to be children and consequently to possess the heavenly heritage which is ordained for us – as well for us, as for the angels of paradise.... The angels tremble when they behold Heaven and Earth.... Ought not [also] we to be more than ravished into wonderment – when we open our eyes and behold God's wonderful works?"

Continued Calvin: "Should we be so unthankful as to shut our eyes, so that we might see nothing? Should we play the deaf men – so that we might hear nothing? So then – let us follow the angels who are set forth to us here as guides – to the intent that God might be glorified at our hands!"

Calvin added: "It is said that all God's children rejoiced in triumph, when they saw the stars.... It is purposely said 'all' – to the end we might know that such as give not their minds earnestly to the magnifying of God in His power which He utters in His works, shall be cut off from his house and are unworthy to be reckoned in the number of His children."

The implications of all of this, are very clear to Calvin. Families of angels, alias the sons of God, praised the Lord in song upon the various days of Earth's formation week. Because restored men too are sons of God – such human families also should praise the Lord in song, and indeed precisely upon the various days of their weeks.

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Finally, in Job 42:7-17, we read that 'the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends. For you have not spoken the thing that is right concerning Me, as My servant Job has! Therefore, take for yourselves now seven bullocks and seven rams – and go to My servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves! And My servant Job shall pray for you"....

'So the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends.... All his brothers and all his sisters came to him...and did eat bread with him in his house.... So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. For he had fourteen thousand sheep [*etc.*].... He had also seven sons and three daughters.... After this, Job lived a hundred-and-forty years, and saw his children and his children's children – even four generations. Then Job died, being old and full of days.'

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In his sermons on the above passage, Calvin declared³⁴⁵ that "God commanded those men to bring their sacrifices to Job, to the end that he should pray for them.... Although God shows Himself gentle and well-minded towards us, yet we have need that He should partly show Himself to be hard – in order to be entreated by us....

"It is added...that God received the face of Job, and turned his captivity – or was turned at his repentance – when he prayed for his friends.... God had regard to the face of Job, and accepted his prayer.... God had pity upon His servant.... It is purposely expressed to have come to pass – when Job prayed for his friends....

"When we pray for...our brethren..., our Lord will make all the requests to redound to ourselves which we shall have made for them. Thus you see why it is purposely said that God looked mercifully upon Job when he had prayed.... It behooves us to call to mind how Saint James says: 'you have heard of the patience of Job, and seen what end an issue God gave him'....

"It is not for Job's sake that this was written, that 'God blessed his latter state more than his first'; that He doubled his goods and substance which were very great before; that He gave him sons and daughters [anew]; and that He lengthened his life, so that he saw the children that came from his own race unto the fourth generation.... That was not for his instruction, but for ours.... It is not without cause that St. James [5:11] has set the selfsame mirrour down for us....

"It behooved the faithful to be handled partly like little children.... That is the cause why...when the ancient fathers are spoken of in the Scripture, it is purposely said that God blessed them in their offspring....

"Let us always be ready to die, assuring ourselves that He has adopted us for His children and that He will show Himself our Father both in life and death.... Therefore let us continually pray [to] Him that, having guided us continually with His Holy Spirit, He will draw us [hence] to Himself and that we may come thither fully satisfied....

³⁴⁵ *Ib.*, pp. 746 & 751.

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"Now let us fall down before the face of our good God, with acknowledgment of our sins, praying Him to vouchsafe to touch us with them more and more – so that we may come to Him with true repentance, to frame ourselves after His righteousness.... Let us call upon our good God and Father..., so as we may be taught...to serve and honour Him...and to yield Him the love and obedience which faithful servants owe to their masters and children to their fathers, seeing it has pleased Him to call us to the number of His servants and children. And let us pray to Him as our good Master has taught us to pray, saying: 'Our Father in heaven! ... Keep on giving us each day our daily bread' *etc!*"

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In his above comments on Job 42, Calvin twice referred to James. In James 5:7-18 we read: 'Be patient, therefore, brethren! ... The farmer keeps on waiting for the precious fruit of the ground, and has long patience for it until he receives the early and the latter rain.... You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord – that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.... Are any of you afflicted? Let him keep on praying! ... Let him keep on singing psalms! ... Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them keep on praying over him! ... Then the prayer of faith shall save the sick....

'Keep on confessing your faults one to another, and keep on praying for one another so that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man keeps on availing much. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.... He kept on praying earnestly that it might not rain. So it did not rain in the land, for the space of three years and six months. Then he prayed again – and the sky gave rain, and the ground brought forth its fruit.'

The entirety of this extended passage in James is concerned with prevailing daily prayer – in the work-place; in the home; and also when on journeys. Here, first Job and then Elijah are mentioned as examples of such persistent prayer – examples which New Testament Christians are to imitate!

The farmer is to pray daily for six months between sowing-time and harvest-time. Job repeatedly prayed for his children, and later for his friends (and they for him when he got sick). Elijah prayed constantly for three-and-a-half years during the great drought. So too should we.

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In his *Commentary on James* (5:7-18), Calvin accordingly remarked:³⁴⁶ "James...mentions the daily patience of the husbandman.... He does not fret because the ground does not immediately yield a ripe fruit.... We ought not to be anxious immoderately, if we must now labour and sow until the harvest...."

"Nobody, as far as we can learn from histories, has ever been overwhelmed with troubles so hard and so various as Job; and yet he emerged from so deep a gulf. Whosoever, then, will imitate his patience – will no doubt find God's hand, which at length delivered him, to be the same.... Afflictions ought to stimulate us to pray. Prosperity supplies us with an occasion to praise God.... May our sorrow teach us to pray! ... He has set the singing of psalms in opposition to profane and unbridled joy...."

"When we come as it were to the very scene itself," explained Calvin, "we utter prayers with more feeling.... Not only Elisha and Paul but Christ Himself roused the ardour of prayer – and commended the grace of God by thus praying...."

"But it must be observed that he [James] connects a promise with the prayer – lest it should be made without faith. For he who doubts, as one who does not rightly call on God, is unworthy to obtain anything.... Whosoever then really seeks to be heard, must be persuaded fully that he does not pray in vain...."

"James," continued Calvin, "here points out the way of brotherly reconciliation – that is, by mutual acknowledgment.... He connects mutual prayer with mutual confession.... He intimates that confession avails to the end that we may be helped toward God by the prayers of our brethren. For they who know our necessities, are stimulated to pray that they may assist us." Indeed, what humans better know our needs – than precisely those with whom we regularly pray at daily family worship?

"When others pray for us" (most relevantly as regards also daily family worship), Calvin commented on James, "he expressly mentions the benefit and the effect of prayer.... He names expressly the prayer of a righteous or just man.... Not that our prayers are founded on our own worthiness, but because the heart must be cleansed by faith before we can present ourselves before God." Yet that is precisely the situation in respect especially of the daily prayers of a cleansed covenant family.

"If the prayer avails much, it is doubtless effectual.... It avails much, because it is effectual.... God will not allow the prayers of the faithful to be void or

³⁴⁶ Calvin Translation Soc. ed., pp. 348.

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useless.... Our prayers may properly be said to be...'working' – when some necessity meets us which excites earnest prayer within us.

"We pray **daily** for the whole Church, that God may pardon its sins. But then only is our prayer really in earnest – when we go forth to succour those who are in trouble. But such efficacy cannot be in the prayers of our brethren – except they know that we are in difficulties." Once again – who better knows our difficulties, than the members of our family with whom we pray every day?

"Elijah kept the sky shut by his prayers, for three years and a half. He again opened it, so that it poured down abundance of rain. Hence appeared the wonderful power of prayer... Though it is not there expressly said that Elijah prayed for drought, it may yet be gathered easily.... [Later,] the rain too was given [in answer] to his prayers....

"We must then observe the rule of prayer, so that it may be by faith.... Elijah was heard. So also we shall be heard – when we pray rightly.... The command to pray is common.... As the promise is common, it follows that the effect also will be common....

"Elijah...was a moral man and subject to the same passions as [are] ourselves.... James reminds us that the saints ought to be considered as having the infirmity of the flesh – so that we may learn to ascribe what they obtained from the Lord not to their merits but to the efficacy of prayer.... James on the contrary argues that as their prayers availed so much, so we ought in like manner to pray at **this day** according to their example – and that we shall not do so in vain!"

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Thus far the implications of the daily prayers of Job with his family – and, to a lesser extent, also of Elijah – for household devotions today. On family worship among other patriarchs after the flood, Calvin identified also and indeed especially its practice in the Abrahamic line of Isaac and Jacob and Joseph. In that regard, he made the following helpful comments.

"Abraham is admitted to the counsel of God because he would faithfully fulfil the office of a good householder, instructing his own family.... God does not make known His will to us so that the knowledge of it may perish with us, but so that we may be His witnesses to posterity – and so that they may deliver the knowledge, received through us, from hand to hand...to their descendants.

"Therefore it is the duty of parents to apply themselves diligently to the work of communicating what they have learned from the Lord, to their children. In this manner, the truth of God is to be propagated by us.... The gross ignorance which

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reigns in the World, is the just punishment of men's idleness.... The greater part close their eyes to the offered light of heavenly doctrine.... There are those who stifle it, by not taking care to transmit it to their children....

"We are taught that we must not only take care of our families, to govern them duly while we live.... We must give diligence, in order that the truth of God which is eternal may live and flourish after our death.... Thus, when we are dead, a holy course of living should survive and remain.... And, lest any one should suppose that this kind of doctrine belongs only to strangers – the Lord specially appoints it for the sons of Abraham: that is, for the household of the Church."

Abraham held family devotions in his home, with his household and his children. God Himself then assured him that also 'they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment.' Genesis 18:19.

Here Calvin commented: "Moses intimates in these words that the judgment of God is proposed.... Thus, the Law avails not only for the beginning of repentance – but also for our continual progress.... From the duties of the Second Table, he briefly shows by the figure 'synecdoche' what God chiefly requires of us.... These are **the lawful exercises [of worship]** in which the Lord commands His people to be employed.

"Moses intimates that Abraham would become possessed of the grace promised to him – if he instructed his children in the fear of the Lord, and governed his household well. But under the person of one man [namely Abraham], a rule common to all the pious is delivered.

"For they who are negligent in this part of their duty, cast off or suppress (as much as in them lies) the grace of God. Therefore, so that the perpetual possession of the gifts of God may remain to us and survive to posterity, we must beware lest they be lost through our neglect!"³⁴⁷

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In his comments on the Decalogue, Calvin clearly understood the principle of contrariety. This means that the prohibitions in the Law of God implicitly also require their opposite injunctions (and *vice-versa*). As we shall see, this principle had – to Calvin – ramifications even for family worship.

Calvin saw God's implicit requirement of regular family worship especially in His Second Commandment. Exodus 20:4-6. Hence, "so that He may encourage us in every way, He promises present blessings as well as eternal felicity [also for

³⁴⁷ *Comm. on Gen.*, Eerdmans ed., I, pp. 481f.

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descendants] to the obedience of those who shall have kept His Commandments – while He threatens transgressors with present sufferings, as well as the punishment of eternal death.....

"There is a promise of mercy to thousands" of generations. That is "a promise which is mentioned in Scripture frequently, and forms an article in the solemn covenant made with the Church." It is the promise that the Lord "will be 'a God unto you, and to your seed after you' (Genesis 17:7).

"With reference to this, Solomon says: 'The just man keeps on walking in his integrity; [and] his children keep on being blessed after him' (Proverbs 20:7)." Indeed, this is said "not only in consequence of a religious education...but in consequence of the blessing promised in the covenant – viz. that the divine favour will keep on dwelling for ever in the families of the righteous."³⁴⁸

Calvin further believed that also the Fourth Commandment, enjoining sabbath observance, has implications even for daily worship. Accordingly, it has further implications also – and indeed especially – for household devotions day after day.

Explained Calvin: "The Lord intended that the Sabbath [Genesis 2:1f] never should be completed before the arrival of the last day... We here begin our blessed rest in Him – and daily make new progress in it... It shall not be consummated [completely], until the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: 'From one...sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, says the Lord' (Isaiah 66:23)."

Calvin continued: "By the seventh day, the Lord delineated to His people the future perfection of His sabbath on the last day – so that, by continual meditation upon the Sabbath, they might throughout their whole lives aspire to this perfection... This is not contented with one day [per week], but requires the whole course of our lives....

"During our whole lives, we should aim at a constant rest from our own works.... Every individual – as he has opportunity – should diligently exercise himself in private, in pious meditation on the works of God.... We must diligently attend on our religious assemblies, and duly avail ourselves of those external aids which tend to promote the worship of God" – in family worship too!

The Fifth Commandment enjoins: 'honour your father and your mother!' Here, Calvin fully understood that this not only requires children to obey their parents.

³⁴⁸ *Inst.*, II:8:4,21 cf. 28-34.

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He knew it equally requires father and mothers to act honourably toward their children – and hence to give them also daily religious education *etc.*

Said Calvin: "Whenever Paul mentions this Commandment, he interprets it as enjoining obedience (Ephesians 6:1-4 & Colossians 3:20-21)... Moreover, while the Lord promises the blessings of present life to children who show proper respect to their parents, He at the same time intimates that an inevitable curse is impending over the rebellious and disobedient"³⁴⁹ – whether children, or parents. So it is exactly here that Paul also enjoins: 'Fathers..., bring up [your children]...in the Lord!' Ephesians 6:4.

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In Exodus 29:38-43, God commands especially the heads of households: "This is that which you shall offer upon the altar – two lambs of the first year, day by day, continually. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer in the evening! ... This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations! ... There I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tent shall be sanctified by My glory!"

Calvin gave some helpful comments on this passage, in his *Harmony of the Pentateuch*. "The custom of sacrificing," he there explained,³⁵⁰ "has always been in use among all nations.... Its origin is doubtless to be traced to the ancient fathers" – *viz.* right back to Adam and Abel; next, down through Seth and Enos to Noah; and thence, on to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob *etc.*

"Before the delivery of the Law," Calvin commented of the patriarchal period prior to Moses, "religion was always sanctioned by sacrifices. Nor can it be doubted but that, by the sacred inspiration of the Spirit, the holy fathers were directed to the Mediator by Whose death God was hereafter to be appeased....

"Their piety was to be testified; or thanksgivings to be made; or zeal to be added to their prayers; or purification to be sought; or sins to be atoned for.... Moreover, since it is plain that God can listen to no prayers without the intercession of Christ – the constant morning and evening sacrifice was instituted to consecrate the prayers of the Church....

"I have thought it well to give the first place among the sacrifices to that daily one which is called the continual sacrifice. For God would have two lambs offered to Him every morning and evening, so that the people might perpetually exercise themselves in the recollection of the future reconciliation....

³⁴⁹ *Ib.*, II:8:35-38.

³⁵⁰ *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948f, II pp. 293f.

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"Propitiation was, therefore, daily made with two lambs – so that the Israelites, being reminded of their guilt and condemnation from the beginning to the end of the day, might learn to flee to God's mercy.... They called it the 'continual' sacrifice – because God commanded it to be offered continually, through all generations."

Similarly, in Numbers 28:2-10, God enjoins: 'Command the children of Israel and say to them, "My offering and My bread for My sacrifices made by fire...you shall observe to offer to Me!" ... Say to them, "this is the offering...which you shall offer to the Lord – two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day, for a continual burnt offering! The one lamb you shall offer in the morning; and the other lamb you shall offer in the evening – and a...meal-offering! ... You shall cause strong wine to be poured out unto the Lord as a drink-offering...and on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot!'"

On the above-mentioned Numbers 28:3-9, Calvin commented:³⁵¹ "He repeats what we have seen in Exodus [29:38-42] – that they should kill two lambs daily, one in the morning and the other in the evening; but [here in Numbers] He speaks more fully of the concomitants of flour and wine, and also refers to the antiquity of this kind of sacrifice....

"Thus men were reminded always to have God before their eyes in the[ir] daily food.... On the Sabbath, the continual sacrifice was to be doubled, and two lambs offered instead of one. For it was reasonable that, as the seventh day was peculiarly dedicated to God – it should be exalted above other days by some extraordinary and distinctive mark."

It is true that these food-sacrifices pointed forward to the death of Christ – where they were fulfilled and terminated. However, the concomitant worship exercises every morning and every evening as such – did not then terminate. They still continue – also for Christian families, every day.

³⁵¹ *Ib.*, II pp. 695f.

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As Calvin commented³⁵² in this regard at Acts 3:1f: "The Lord appointed that the Jews should offer sacrifice evening and morning (Exodus 29:41). By this practice, they were taught to begin and end the day by calling upon God and worshipping Him (Numbers 28:4)... Now in that the Lord desired the people of old to observe stated hours, we gather that the Church cannot do without a fixed discipline. Even today...it would be valuable for us to have such meetings daily!" Compare too First Timothy 2:8-15 & 3:1-5 with 4:1-5.

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In Deuteronomy 4:9, Moses says the Hebrews must not forget the things they had seen. For they must teach them to their sons, and grandsons.

Here, John Calvin commented:³⁵³ "We must take measures against our unsteadfastness! For nothing is more easy, than that all our zeal should suddenly be forgotten – or should gradually grow cold.

"God had established the certainly of His Law, as far as was necessary for the grateful and the attentive. Yet not without reason does He desire the people to remember how great is the carelessness of men. Nor does He command those who were eye-witnesses only to remember, but also to hand down (what they had seen) to their sons and grandsons – so that the memory of such remarkable things might be preserved."

Calvin's comments³⁵⁴ on the *locus classicus* of daily family worship – Deuteronomy 6:6f – is to the point. "God again commands (as before) the study of His Law.... Afterwards, He enjoins that constant conversation should be held about it with their children – in order that fathers should diligently attend and apply themselves to the duty of instruction.

"The word *shanan* which Moses uses" here, wrote Calvin, "properly means: 'to whet'.... It is employed metaphorically for 'to reiterate' or 'to repeat constantly'.... They [the parents] should cause it to penetrate their minds – as if they should 'prick' them [the children] with the point of a sword....

³⁵² *Comm. on Acts*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, I p. 92.

³⁵³ *Comm. on Deut.* 4:9.

³⁵⁴ *Comm. on Deut.* 6:6f & 11:18.

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"If anyone will consider carefully how slow and careless men are in learning and how forgetful they are when they seem to have made some progress, he will acknowledge readily that Moses does not urge them so strongly on insufficient grounds.... It was highly necessary for him thus to be rigid, in exacting their attention."

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It is at this point appropriate to cite much relevant material from Calvin's *Sermons on Deuteronomy*. First, we look at his sermon on Deuteronomy 4:10 – 'I will make them hear My words so that they may learn to fear Me all the days they shall live upon the Earth, and so that they may teach their children.'

There, John Calvin declared:³⁵⁵ "It is not enough for every man to discharge his duty in living orderly himself.... We must (to the uttermost of our power) procure the continuance of God's honour and service...."

"God's glory must endure for ever, without decaying. Therefore, let us hear our own duty – that is, to walk righteously all the time of our life; and to endeavour to train up our children aright, so that religion may flourish and prosper...."

"That is the very cause also why God commands fathers so straightly to teach their children.... He charges fathers to bring up their children. And why? To the end they should know they must yield an account of them.... They should be the more earnest and careful in teaching their children their duties."

"What manner of ones are they which have been born all this time, to whom God has granted the grace to be suckled with God's Word even from the breast...and to be brought up in it likewise? ... They therefore ought to be even thoroughly soaked in the doctrine of salvation.... God has granted us the grace...to be called to the hearing of His Word...."

"Let us understand that we be the more bound to serve and honour Him not only severally for our own parts, but also by teaching our children and by taking pains to make them also live virtuously.... Let us all have this regard – that such as come after us may agree in the true religion, so as there may be no change.... Let us understand that we ought to be as earnest in building up to the Lord – as the devil is in pulling all down. For let us not mistrust but that God's power is stronger than all the fiends of hell!"

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³⁵⁵J. Calvin: *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987 rep., p. 129.

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Second, we look at Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 5:9f. That passage states: 'I am the Lord your God...[Who keeps on] visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children even upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto a thousand generations toward them that love Me and keep My Commandments.'

There, Calvin³⁵⁶ had God declare: "My children, do not look for Me to punish you! ... I tell you that if you abide pure and sound in My obedience – I will also continue in doing good to you even unto a thousand generations, so that your children after you shall find Me still the same."

Third, we look at Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 5:12 – 'Keep the day of rest to hallow it as the Lord your God has commanded you.... The seventh day is the rest of the Lord your God. You shall not do any work on it – neither you yourself, nor your son nor your daughter' *etc.*

There, Calvin declared: "Let us see if those who name themselves Christians, discharge themselves as they ought to do.... It is not enough for us to think about God and His works upon the Lord's day every man alone by himself.... We must meet together.... Indeed, this ought to be done **every day**, as I have said before....

"It is expedient that there be a day of rest for us to meet together so that we be confirmed in the doctrine of God – **and** profit **daily** therein...all the time of our life, and also be occupied in calling upon His Name....

"He has a consideration to guide us as a **father** does his **children**.... We ought to be so spiritual as to assemble **every day** to call upon the Name of God....

"If any[one] has authority over others, they must not despise their neighbours – though they be their inferiors.... They ought to walk in all manner of mildness, and not oppress those that are under their charge, but rather behave themselves as fathers, and regard their subjects as they do their children."³⁵⁷

Fourth, we look at Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 5:16 – 'Honour your father and your mother as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that your days may be prolonged and so that it may go well with you in the land.'

There, Calvin declared:³⁵⁸ "If God's Law were not meet to teach the rude and unlearned, many would allege that they are not clerks and that they never went to school...so that God's Law does not bind them. But inasmuch as we see that God

³⁵⁶ *Ib.*, p. 193.

³⁵⁷ *Ib.*, pp. 204f.

³⁵⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 213-16.

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has stooped to our rudeness..., you see that God's comprehending all under one particular was to train us on as little children.... That is the true and natural sense....

"This thing must warn both them who are in authority as well as them that are under subjection. Then, if men and women have children, they must understand that there is no subjection due unto them, except they themselves be overruled by God.

"Now then, what is to be done? Let the father train up his child diligently in the fear of God, and himself begin to show him the way! Let the mother do the like – so that God may have His honour from both great and small, old and young! ... The like ought every man to do, in his own house and family....

"What zeal or mind have fathers and mothers to bring up their children in the fear of God? ... Let fathers and mothers have a care to bring up their children well, and to make them know God as their only Father!"

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Fifth, we look at Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 6:5f. That passage states: 'These words which I command you this day, shall be in your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk about them when you sit in your home, and when you walk by the wayside, and when you lie down, and when you rise up' *etc.*

There, Calvin declared:³⁵⁹ "He says that men must have God's laws continually in their sight.... We must make all our deckings of God's Law – instead of the beautifying of houses with things of goodly show and furniture.... The Law of God must be written upon it....

"Our Lord will have His people exercised in taking and conferring upon His Law – whether it be in resting or in journeying; or when they be at home in their houses.... We must speak of God's Law much more with our hearts than with our mouths. But yet we must talk about it also, to edify our neighbours – so that the father may teach his children, and the master his servants, to serve God.

"That is the cause why our Lord commands men to talk about His Law.... The fathers and masters in the meanwhile [are] to be careful to teach their children and servants, as I said before....

³⁵⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 275f.

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"Consider rather what is the true decking of faithful women." It is: "to fear God; to live honestly, mildly, chastely and soberly; to govern their households well; and to occupy themselves in bringing up their children."

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Sixth, we look at Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 6:20f. That states the following. 'When your child asks you...saying: "What are these testimonies, ordinances and laws which the Lord our God has commanded you?" – you shall say to your child: "We were Pharaoh's bondfolk in Egypt, but the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand!"'

There, Calvin explained:³⁶⁰ "The intent of Moses is that those to whom he had declared the Law should not only themselves endeavour to serve God during their own lives, but also find the means – so that their children and successors should follow them in the same.... Specially they that have children, ought to think that it is they to whom this warning is given....

"They which have children ought to consider that they shall yield account for it – if they do not what they can to hold them in the fear of God and to see them so instructed and stablished in the pure doctrine as they may continue in it.... The knowledge of God's truth may still be conveyed over from hand to hand....

"You see what we have to remember about this place where Moses says: 'If your child ask hereafter what these commandments, statutes and ordinances mean'.... He presupposes that the children are not so brutish as at least not to be willing and desirous to know why they serve God thus.... It is God's ordinance that the fathers should help their children....

"If children be willing to learn and to profit, God here assigns them their fathers – to be their teachers and schoolmasters.... He has appointed the order of prayer, both public and private. It is because each of us ought to inure himself to seek all his succour at His hand" – directly from the Lord Himself.

Seventh, we look at Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 11:18f – 'Lay up these words in your hearts and in your minds.... Teach them to your children, talking of them when you are at home in your house, and when you go abroad, and when you lie down, and when you get up...so that your days and the days of your children may be increased' *etc.* There, Calvin declared:³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ *Ib.*, pp. 297f.

³⁶¹ *Ib.*, pp. 472f.

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"Men should lay up the things in their hearts...to the intent they might occasion them to think upon the Law of God.... At their rising in the morning and at their going to bed at night – men should talk and confer about this, so that their children might learn thereby....

"Let us say – how is it possible that I could keep myself in fear of my God? If I should pass but one day without thinking about Him by and by – then what is to be done? As soon as I rise in the morning, the devil offers me many lets [or attempts to try to keep man from worship]. Now it stands me in hand to resist him!"

Moreover: "Again at night, when I go to bed – forasmuch as at nighttimes the devil does not cease to put many fond fancies in my head, and a man is not able to restrain his own mind from conceiving some or other vain thoughts – it behooves me still to be fenced, by being mindful of my God....

"A mother that has her eye always upon the child which she brings up," continued Calvin, "will always be at hand.... Therefore let us learn to exercise ourselves in that study, all the time of our life!"

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Eighth, we look at Calvin's sermons on Deuteronomy 29:9-29. There, Moses declared to the Israelites: 'You shall therefore keep the words of this covenant....

"You be all standing at this day before the face of the Lord your God – your heads of your tribes; your elders; your captains...; also your children, your wives, and your stranger who is in your camp.... The secrets of the Lord our God are revealed to us, and to our children for ever – to the intent we should do all the words of this Law.'

There, Calvin explained:³⁶² "When God Himself utters – then, even the highest ought to understand that they must show the way to others and go afore to provoke [or to encourage] them by their example.... He adds 'the women and children' – so that the people might know how there was no person who would not be comprehended in that covenant....

"Forasmuch as God did this favour to their little children, to receive them into the number of His people – it was meet that they should be taught the Law of God...to the intent they might know that they were that blessed offspring which God had adopted and chosen out of all the world....

³⁶² *Ib.*, pp. 1027f & 1043f & 1046f.

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"Moses exhorts the men to have care of their families." They needed "to consider that – seeing all were dedicated to God – all ought to be referred to that end...."

"Husbands were taught by this word to take pains to guide their wives and children in such order, so as God might be honoured in all the house – and so that there might be one common agreement in the same.... Every man ought to bethink him of his household and family.

"They that will have their wives quiet and obedient to them, ought much rather to be diligent to cause them to serve God and to take such pains so to rule their children as God may be the chief Father, Husband, and Master of the house. That is the thing of which we are admonished here...."

"If we do not so – then, look how often we come into the church! So many witnessings have we to reprove and to condemn us before God – because we do not appear in His presence with such humility as is requisite, but have wickedly broken covenant with Him! ... God has His secrets to Himself.... Unto us and unto our children, He has uttered His Law...."

"Let us not say: 'I am no clerk [or cleric]; I have not been at school!' For behold, the Law is set forth to all folk – both little and great! God would have us all to be instructed therein. Therefore these are apparent matters – which must be known to us and to our children...."

"See how St. Paul scorns all such as will needs be wildheaded and not submit themselves quietly to the obedience of God's Word! First Corinthians 14:38. Compare verses 34-38, 'Let your womenfolk keep silence in the churches.... If they wish to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home! ... Do you wish to remain ignorant?'"

Calvin continued: "Let us benefit ourselves by the doctrine of salvation!" This should be done "by yielding ourselves quietly to God (as I said before) – to be instructed by him who shows himself to be a teacher of the little ones and lowly ones, and seeks nothing but to be edified through faith in the fear of His Name."

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Ninth, we look at Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 31:12f. That states: 'You shall gather the people together – men, women and children, and your stranger who is within your gates – so that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God and keep all the words of this Law, to do them; and so that their children too, who had not known it, may hear it and learn it, so that they may fear the Lord your God all the days you have to live in the land.'

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There, Calvin declared:³⁶³ "The Law shall be preached and recited to men, women and little children. We see in this place that God has not given His Word to a small portion of people only, but would that all in general should be partakers of it – even from the most unto the least.... Here God says that when He gave His Law, it was not only for the tribe of Levi but for all the people – and not for men only, but for women also; yea, and even for the little children....

"Let none of us in this case allege, 'I am no clerk!' For God has not spoken to the great doctors only. But His will was to deal forth His Word in common both to great and small, and to the most ignorant. And He has so tempered it to their capacities, as that all they which come to yield themselves teachable – shall very well perceive that our Lord knew well what is meet for them....

"God had given His Law to all the Jews.... It was a good and profitable instruction, as well for the little children as for the elders.... Surely, it ought to move us very much when he says that God will have all – yea, even the little children and all – to be hearers of His Law. For He tells us (as Solomon also says in his book of the Preacher) that we must not delay to think about God till they begin to droop and be broken with age!"

[Solomon's Preacher alias Ecclesiastes (11:5 & 12:1) says: "As you do not know the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones grow in the womb of her that is pregnant – even so you do not know the works of God Who makes everything.... Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth while...the years do not draw near when you shall say, 'I have no pleasure in them!'"]

Continues Calvin on Deuteronomy 31:12 – "Now Moses shows in this place that as soon as the little ones begin to discern between good and evil, they must learn to know what God created them.... God has showed Himself to be their Father....

"As our children be born, they be carried to baptism. And there, God does show that He has already chosen them – and that His will is that they should be as of His household."

Tenth, we look at Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 32:7 – 'Remember the time past; consider the years of so many generations! Ask your father, and he will show you; inquire of your elders, and they will tell you!' There, Calvin declared:³⁶⁴

³⁶³ *Ib.*, pp. 1082f.

³⁶⁴ *Ib.*, p. 1115.

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"Not without cause does Moses say, 'Bethink yourselves of the old time!' And afterward he says, 'You have witnesses enough! Inquire of your fathers; inquire of all those that have lived before you...and they will tell you news!' ... This text ought to teach us first to be mindful of the benefits which He has done to our fathers, although we have not seen them in our own time. For that is a thing on which we must set our minds."

* * * * *

In Second Samuel 6:10-20, we read: 'David would not remove the ark of the Lord...from the house of Obed-edom... And the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household. Then David blessed the people in the Name of the Lord of hosts.... All the people departed every one to his house. Then David returned to bless his household.'

In his sermons on Second Samuel 6:10-23, John Calvin stated:³⁶⁵ "David lodged the ark in the house of Obed-edom, and this man prospered and all his family. This prosperity gave evident testimony that God accepted the worship of Obed-edom for having lent Him his house in which to lodge His ark....

"It goes on to say that 'David brought the ark with joy' (Second Samuel 6:12), especially since he had tasted the grace of God which had come to Obed-edom.... It says afterwards that 'having offered...sacrifice, he blessed the people in the Name of God'....

"This word 'to bless' signifies prayers.... David prayed for all the people.... He had a special concern, since he was king.... He who is head of the people, has the responsibility to guide and govern them.... David was very aware of the charge which God had given him over the people....

"It is said that David 'came to bless his house.' We have explained this word when it was mentioned above that he blessed the people. The text also says that he came to pray to God in private, so that his family would prosper....

"Since David had already publicly declared that all the good and prosperity of the people depended on the pure grace of God, he now gave the same testimony to his family in private....

"It is certainly true that fathers of families (as one says) and heads of houses ought to be careful to do their duty in governing those who are placed under their authority.... The main thing that parents should do, is to take refuge in God.

³⁶⁵ J. Calvin: *Sermons on Second Samuel*, ed. D.F. Kelly, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1992, pp. 257 & 262 & 272-74 & 279f.

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Those who have children should recognize that they will never reach their goal...unless God takes the whole matter in hand....

"If God does not preside in their house, everything will go badly and there will be much confusion. Even when a man has only his wife, he must know that when his house is not blessed by God, there will be nothing but poverty..... This dependence was demonstrated by means of a public ceremony."

Later, after a son was born to David, the Lord struck that child. 'David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted and went in and lay all night upon the ground. Then the elders of his house arose, and went to him.... On the seventh day...the child died....

'David perceived that the child was dead.... Then David arose...and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped. Then he came to his own home.... And he said: 'While the child was yet alive, I fasted.... Now he is dead.... I shall go to him'.... Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife." Second Samuel 12:15-24.

In his sermons on Second Samuel 12:15-31, Calvin declared³⁶⁶ "that David – seeing the child sick, began 'to fast' and 'to pray' to God with tears, which shows us the strength of feeling in his prayer.... It is not required that, absolutely every time we pray, tears should flow.... But when God touches us to the quick...there is every reason for our prayers to be filled with the strongest feeling....

"We should pray to God every day, morning and evening.... We should wake up, and not simply go through our ordinary routine. Rather, we should force ourselves to pray to God and humble ourselves before Him....

"The servants of David came to him... He saw a poor little baby suffering.... The child had not offended.... When David saw his own flesh and blood there, and since he knew that God had smitten the child for the sin which he [David] had committed, there is no doubt that he was in terrible distress. Therefore, when he prayed to God for the child, there is no doubt that he was still considering himself – and was also praying to God to obtain pardon for the crime that he had committed....

"We may just pray to God, for a child.... But David was not ignorant.... Let us carefully note therefore that David prayed not only out of parental affection.... This led him to humble himself before God.... This, in sum, is what David attempted – in praying to God for the healing of the child....

³⁶⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 583-93.

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"David, having heard of the death of the little child, got up.... Moreover, when he said: 'he shall not return to me' but rather 'I must go to him' – he was showing here the hope that he had of life after death.... There – is a better life for our souls....

"David clearly knew that although he had life in this world, he had to await another life even more certain than this one.... He was always aware that after his death he would without doubt contemplate the glory of God.... Let us learn to be joined with the faithful who have gone on before us – by faith, and with a true obedience and holiness – so that we may be received into their ranks and into their company."

Beyond doubt, the latter sentence clearly implies Calvin believed that both David and his dead infant son were faithful believers. Calvin's next paragraphs below imply further that also David's wife Bathsheba was a believer. For the 'trinity' of David and Bathsheba and their dead baby had constituted a forgiven faithful family, no doubt also practising daily household worship at least from the time of the commencement of that marriage onward. Compare Second Samuel 6:18-20 with 12:15-25.

Continued Calvin:³⁶⁷ "It says here that David went 'to the house of the Lord' before taking his food.... That is how we must do it.... This is how David maintained the worship of God.... After all that, David did indeed return to his house and rejoiced there – eating and drinking in his usual way....

"God wants us to rejoice in the good things that He gives us for our nourishment.... Let us prostrate ourselves before the majesty of our God! ... Let us learn to be so patient in all our adversities, that His Name may be blessed by us....

"We have seen how David, having lost his son, recognized...that God was a just Judge.... If he had not felt this, he would not have come before God to worship Him and give Him thanks.... Now, it also says that he 'consoled Bathsheba his wife'.... There was a mutual accord between them.... They rejoiced in the grace that God bestowed on them...also for blessing their marriage....

"David consoled his wife.... He had a[nother] son, who was called Solomon by his mother.... In particular, it says that 'he was loved by God'.... For this reason, David gave him the surname 'Jedidiah' – which means the same as 'loved by God'....

³⁶⁷ *Ib.*, pp. 593-96 & 598-601.

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"When we pray to God, let us not doubt that He can console us.... What is recounted here about David and Bathsheba, belongs to us.... God visited them. He consoled one, and then the other.... The[ir belated] marriage...would prosper.... The marks of His own mercy would be upon it."

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Even while commenting on Deuteronomy as regards daily family worship, Calvin already anticipated similar material also in the first chapter of the later book of Psalms. For while so commenting, he referred to the opening verses of the Psalter:

'Blessed is the man who does not keep on walking in the counsel of the ungodly; nor keep on standing in the way of sinners; nor keep on sitting in the seat of the scornful! But his delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in His Law he keeps on meditating day and night.'

Calvin then declared: "The prophet in Psalm 1:2 pronounces them to be blessed who meditate in God's Law 'day and night.' He leaves...no portion of time unoccupied with meditation on the Law – whether they are at home, or abroad, or when they retire to rest, or when they rise in the morning....

"Moses does not urge the people to empty talkativeness.... He would have them severally thus establish themselves and be teachers of each other.... Not only should each of them consult their own individual advantage, but also teach their children. Thereby God's Law would ever be maintained in vigour, by perpetual succession."³⁶⁸

David writes in Psalm 55:17: 'Evening and morning and noon will I pray and cry out aloud; and He shall hear my voice.' As in First Timothy 4:3-5 – this certainly seems to imply worship at family mealtimes thrice daily.

Here, Calvin commented:³⁶⁹ "From the particular mention he makes of 'evening,' 'morning,' and 'noon' – we are left to infer that these must have been the stated hours of prayer amongst the godly at that period. Sacrifices were offered daily in the temple morning and evening, and by this they were taught to engage privately in prayer within their own houses....

"As we are naturally indisposed for the duty of prayer, there is a danger that we may become remiss, and gradually omit it altogether – unless we restrict ourselves to a certain rule. In appointing particular fixed hours to be observed for

³⁶⁸ *Comm. on Deut. 6:6, in Harm. Pent. (Eerdmans), I p. 367.*

³⁶⁹ *The Book of Psalms, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948f, II pp. 338f.*

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His worship, there can be no doubt that God had respect to the infirmity of our nature.... The same principle should be applied to the secret as to the public services of devotion – as appears from the passage now before us, and from the example of Daniel (chapter 9:3)" *cf.* 6:10f.

"Sacrifices are no longer to be observed in the Church," after Calvary. "But as there remains the same indisposition on our part to the duty, and an equal need of incitements to overcome it – we should still prescribe certain hours to ourselves, to be observed in prayer."

Significant are Calvin's comments on Psalm 78. There, he wrote: "It was incumbent upon the fathers to recount to their children the things...[which] ought of course to have been known familiarly to all the people – yes, even to those who were most illiterate and had the weakest capacity....

"However high may be the majesty of the Word of God – this does not prevent the benefits or advantages of it from reaching even to the unlearned and to babes.... He adds that the knowledge of these subjects had been communicated to the Jews by their fathers...under the domestic roof....

"It was the will of God that these things should be published from age to age, without interruption – so that, being transmitted from father to child in each family, they might reach even the last family of man. The end for which this was to be done, is shown – so that 'they might celebrate the praises of Jehovah in the wonderful works which He has done'....

"The prophet [here] teaches us that it is our bounden duty to use our endeavours, so that there may be a continual succession of persons to communicate instruction in divine truth. It is said of Abraham before the Law was written, Genesis 18:19 – 'I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him.... They shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment'.... After his death, this was enjoined upon the patriarchs, as a necessary part of their duty." Thus Calvin.³⁷⁰

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In Psalm 133:1, David exclaims: 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to keep on dwelling together in unity.' It will be remembered that David and his six brothers were all raised together, in the house of the godly Jesse (First Samuel 16:5-11).

³⁷⁰ *Comm.* on Ps. 78:3-6.

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It should also be remembered that Calvin, when preaching a sermon from Job 1:2-5, pointed out³⁷¹ "how his children behaved themselves and how he himself also on his part governed them in the fear of God.... Behold the good agreement and love that was among Job's children, and specially how they exercised themselves continually therein.... Good agreement and friendship among men, and specially among brethren, is as pleasant a thing unto God as any can be. We hear how it is said in the psalm: 'It is a joyful thing when brethren agree.' Psalm 133."

Calvin's further discussion of the daily family worship of Job and his seven sons when they were young, is applicable also to that of Jesse and his seven sons when they were still all together. Preached Calvin: "When we be set at the table to drink and to eat, let us pray to God – beseeching Him of His gracious goodness to keep us.... Let us look up unto God, Who shows Himself a Father toward us and has witnessed to us that we be His children...."

"When Job's children had made an end of feasting each other by turns, Job commanded them to sanctify themselves.... Let us mark that Job, in commanding his children to sanctify themselves, has shown the manner of the upbringing which he gave them in their childhood – that is, to wit, to serve God."

Mutatis mutandis, the same applies to Jesse's upbringing of all his children. This is mentioned by Jesse's son David in Psalm 133, and also in Calvin's *Sermons on Job* (1:2-5).

His *Commentary on the Psalms* added³⁷² that some "interpreters...have considered that David" in Psalm 133 "passes a general commendation upon brotherly union.... 'We...who were naturally brethren'" – it may mean – "'how well is it that we should cultivate a spirit of brotherly concord!'"

While agreeing with this interpretation as far as it goes, Calvin himself then added: "There can at the same time be no doubt that the Holy Ghost is to be viewed as commending in this passage that mutual harmony which should subsist amongst all God's children – and exhorting us to make every endeavour to maintain it.

"So long as animosities divide us, and heart-burnings prevail amongst us, we may be brethren no doubt still by common relation to God but cannot be judged one, so long as we present the appearance of a broken and dismembered body.

³⁷¹ See n. 342 above.

³⁷² *Comm. Pss.*, V pp. 164f.

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As we are one in God the Father and in Christ, the union must be ratified amongst us by reciprocal harmony and fraternal love."

'Behold how good and how becoming, that brothers should keep on dwelling together! [It is]...like the dew of Hermon which descends upon the mountains of Zion.' Psalm 133:1-3. Commented Calvin: "David suggests that the life of man would be sapless, unprofitable and wretched – unless sustained by brotherly harmony.... We recognise no brotherhood, as I have said already, except amongst the children of God."

This must certainly be true of brethren within the Christian Church. How much more it needs to be true of brothers within Christian families! It will be so – if the latter meet together for daily household worship.

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Ungodly households which neglect family devotions to Jehovah, explained Calvin,³⁷³ are subject to His holy wrath. "Whenever the infliction is designed to avenge, then the curse and wrath of God displays itself. This is never the case with believers. On the contrary, the chastening of God carries His blessing with it – and is an evidence of love, as Scripture teaches. Job 5:17; Proverbs 3:11; Hebrews 12:5....

"The Lord chastens His servants sore – but does not give them over unto death. Psalm 118:18. When afflicted, they acknowledge it is good for them – so that they may learn His statutes. Psalm 119:71.... 'O Lord, correct me (says Jeremiah), but with judgment – not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing! Pour out Your fury upon the heathen that do not know You, and upon the families that do not call on Your Name!' Jeremiah 10:24-25." Thus, the holy Jeremiah curses non-praying families.

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We can therefore be quite certain that if that godly exile Daniel had a family, its members would have prayed with him thrice daily – as he himself indeed did. 'He went into his house.... He kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he had done aforetime....

'Men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.... He makes his petition three times a day.' Daniel 6:3-13f.

³⁷³ *Inst.*, III:4:32.

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On this, Calvin commented:³⁷⁴ "Daniel admonishes us by his own example to study to strive after integrity.... The nobles of the kingdom purposely endeavoured to ruin the holy prophet, either by casting him into the lions' den to perish – or else by causing him to desist from the outward profession of worshipping God....

"Although they did not worship Israel's God, they knew the prophet's mind to be pious and straightforward.... They could not disguise from themselves the duty of worshipping God. They worshipped and adored unknown deities, yet did not dare to condemn the worship of Israel's God....

"Daniel now relates how he was clothed in the boldness of the Spirit of God to offer his life as a sacrifice to God.... His liberation [later from the lions' den] showed how greatly his piety was approved, because he had rather lose his life than change any of his habits respecting the worship of God.... Prayer constitutes the chief part of our adoration and worship of God....

"How mad were the nobles who, to ruin Daniel as far as they possibly could, endeavoured to abolish all piety! ... It is not surprising that Daniel cordially opposed the sacrilegious edict. Now, with respect to the profession of piety, it was necessary to testify before men his perseverance in the worship of God....

"If he had altered his habits at all, it would have been a partial abjuration.... God requires not only faith in the heart and the inward affections, but also the witness and confession of our piety....

"Daniel, therefore, was obliged to persevere in the holy practice to which he was accustomed.... He was in the habit of praying.... We must maintain therefore not only the duty of offering to God the sacrifice of prayer in our hearts.... Our open profession is also required – so that thus the reality of our worship of God may appear clearly....

"Although Daniel did not send for the Chaldeans by the sound of a trumpet whenever he wished to pray – yet he framed his prayers and his vows upon his couch as usual, and did not pretend to be forgetful of piety when he saw his faith put to the test.... Hence he distinctly says 'he went home'....

"He retired to his house.... Let us learn...when we feel ourselves to be too sluggish and cold in prayer, to collect all the aids which can arouse our feelings and correct the torpor of which we are conscious....

³⁷⁴ *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948f ed., I pp. 353-65.

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"He says 'he prayed three times a day' [*cf.* Psalm 55:17]. This is worthy of observation – because, unless we fix certain hours in the day for prayer, it easily slips from our memory. Although, therefore, Daniel was constant in pouring forth prayers – yet he enjoined upon himself the customary rite of prostrating himself before God three times a day.

"When we rise in the morning, unless we commence the day by praying to God – we show a brutish stupidity. So also when we retire to rest, and when we take our food – and at others times, as everyone finds most advantageous to himself... We ought all to feel our infirmities, and to apply the proper remedies. Therefore, for this reason, Daniel was in the habit of praying thrice....

"In Daniel's case, we must remark about another circumstance. He had been an exile for a long time, and tossed about in many troubles and changes. Still he celebrates God's praises.... Since Daniel then could persevere in praising God when oppressed by so many sorrows, anxieties, and troubles – this was a remarkable proof of invincible patience.

"And doubtless, he signifies a continuous act, by using the demonstrative pronoun *deneh*, which refers to his ordinary habit – 'as he had done before, and from former times'.... He was not only accustomed to pray once or twice, but by a regular constancy he exercised himself in this duty of piety – every day."

Finally, Calvin terminated his above comments on Daniel's prayers thrice daily. That the genius of Geneva did, with his own beautiful prayer. It ran as follows:

"Grant, Almighty God, since You have reconciled us to Yourself by the precious blood of Your Son, that we may not be our own – but be devoted to You in perfect obedience, and may consecrate ourselves entirely to You! May we offer our bodies and souls in sacrifice – and be prepared rather to suffer a hundred deaths than to decline from Your true and sincere worship!

"Grant us especially to exercise ourselves in prayer; to fly to You every moment; and to commit ourselves to Your fatherly care – so that Your Spirit may govern us to the end. Do You defend and sustain us – until we are collected into that heavenly Kingdom which Your only-begotten Son has prepared for us by His blood! Amen."

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Several decades passed after the demise of Daniel. Then it was suggested that not only at that time but also especially at and after the later outpouring of the

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Holy Spirit in Jerusalem on Pentecost Sunday – God's true people would repent and mourn for their sins especially in their own family homes.

'I will pour...upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplications – and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son.... In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem.... The land shall mourn, every family apart: the family of the house of David, apart...; the family of the house of Nathan, apart...; the family of the house of Levi, apart...; all the families that remain, every family apart'.... Zechariah 12:10-14 (*cf.* Acts 2:32-39 & 2:46 & 5:42 & 16:14-40 & 18:7f).

Thus, every covenant family would worship apart – separately, in its own home. Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin commented:³⁷⁵ "This lamentation would be in 'every family apart'.... It would not be a feigned or pretended ceremony, as when one begins to weep and draws tears from the eyes of others....

"It would be real sorrow.... Every one, compelled by his own feeling, would really grieve and lament.... Families would lament apart. Indeed, the faithful ought to stimulate others by their example – and encourage them to repent. But in a congregation, hardly one in ten prays in earnest for pardon and really laments on account of his sins....

"The prophet, in order to set forth real sorrow, represents here every family by itself – as though he had said 'The family of David shall know that it had sinned, and the family of Levi...shall yet inwardly acknowledge its guilt.' We now see why Zechariah repeats the word 'apart' so often.... The prophet, by mentioning certain families, meant to include the whole people.... This lamentation would be common to 'all the remaining families.'"

* * * * *

In the last book of the Old Testament, God declares: 'A son honours his father.... If then I be a Father – where is My honour? ... From the rising of the sun even unto its going down, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name!' Malachi 1:6-11.

³⁷⁵ *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948f ed., V pp. 371-73.

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Commented Calvin:³⁷⁶ "God has already proved that He had by many favours been a Father.... He first compares Himself to a father, and then to a master. He says that in these two respects He had a just cause to complain of the Jews....

"He [Jehovah] had been a father to them, but they did not in their turn conduct themselves as children in a submissive and obedient manner – as they ought to have done. And farther, He became their master. But they shook off the yoke, and did not allow themselves to be ruled by His authority....

"He says that 'a son honours his father'.... Honour is due to a father from a son.... The Lord then complains that He was deprived by the Jews of the honour which sons owe to their fathers." Malachi 1:6.

In Malachi 1:11, Calvin continued,³⁷⁷ "God shows...He would bid altars to be reared for Him everywhere and through[out] all parts of the World [so] that He might purely be worshipped by all nations.... The doctrine of salvation would be propagated to the utmost extremities of the Earth [Matthew 28:19].... The Gentiles would become holy to God, because He would adopt them....

"The Law which had been given to the Jews, would be proclaimed among all nations – so that true religion might spread everywhere.... The prophet repeatedly confirms what it was then difficult to believe – 'the Name of God' he says 'shall be great in every place'" and therefore also in the household devotions of every family on Earth. Genesis 12:3.

"The prophets" like Malachi, explained Calvin, "intend to show that the whole World would come to the faith and true religion. 'An altar,' they say, 'shall be built to God'....

"God will be worshipped and adored everywhere. But what are the sacrifices of the New Testament? They are prayers and thanksgivings, according to what the Apostle says in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews [13:12f]....

"This passage [Malachi 1:11] contains nothing else than that the time would come when the pure and spiritual worship of God would prevail in all places.... As we have seen in Joel [2:28], 'In the last days I will pour My Spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions'.... We also find what is similar, in this place." Malachi 1:11.

³⁷⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 483f.

³⁷⁷ *Ib.*, pp. 498f.

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Finally, in Malachi 4:5f, the Lord promised the Hebrews: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet – before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.'

Here, Calvin commented³⁷⁸ that "Christ Himself took away all doubt on this point, when He said that John the Baptizer was the 'Elijah' who had been promised. Matthew 11:10....

"Malachi takes it for granted that there was formerly true religion in that people.... But since in course of time...sincerity had become wholly corrupted, he now recalls them to their first condition – so that sons might unite in sentiments with their fathers, and fathers also with their sons, and become one in that faith which had been delivered in the Law....

"There have been some converted young men who have shown the right way to their fathers, and have carried light before them." Calvin knew that this was so, also at the time of the Protestant Reformation. So too does the Calvinist presently writing these words. For I myself, when converted as a young man, had the great joy of bringing both my father and my mother to Jesus Christ – and seeing them embrace Him as also their own Lord and Saviour.

* * * * *

Thus the predictions of Malachi, on John the Baptizer and his preparation of the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, carry over into the New Testament. These great predictions were centrally fulfilled at the conceptions of John and Jesus.

These same predictions were publically manifested, when John later baptized Jesus. Indeed, they keep on being demonstrated whenever and wherever Christian families today repent and worship and obey the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Zechariah 12:10-14 and Malachi 4:4-6.

Hence, Christians worship together – also in their family homes. When obedient to God, they worship thus each day. For Jesus Himself enjoined that also as families they should pray to their heavenly Father: 'Give us, this day, our daily bread!' Matthew 6:11 *cf.* Luke 11:3.

Calvin commented:³⁷⁹ "Christ speaks here of bodily food.... Otherwise, the prayer would be defective and incomplete.... Besides, the word *semeron* –

³⁷⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 627-31.

³⁷⁹ *Comm.* on Matt. 6:11.

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'today' – means that we are to ask from God no more than is necessary for the day." Such "bodily food...for the day" is normally eaten by households, when seated all together around the family table.

Discussing such family food, Calvin's French here had: "*au pris que le jour vient l'un apres l'autre*" (alias 'as far as one day comes after another'). He continued: "As the kindness of God flows in uninterrupted succession to feed us, the bread which He bestows is called '*epiousios*' – that is: continual."

Calvin here also used the word '*superveniens*' – meaning: 'succeeding' or 'coming by each day.' He then elucidated: "This word suggests to us such a petition as the following: 'Lord, since our life every day needs new supplies – may it please You to grant them to us without interruption!'"

He continued: "The adverb 'today'...is added, to restrain our excessive desire – and to teach us that we depend every moment on the kindness of God and ought to be content with that portion which He gives us, to use a common expression, 'from day to day.'"

* * * * *

Calvin's chapter on 'Prayer' (subtitled 'A Perpetual Exercise of Faith and the Daily Benefits Derived From It') in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* – is even more specific. He stated³⁸⁰ that "prayer...extends also in measure to the public prayers....

"Certain hours are fixed beforehand." Such are "hours which, though indifferent in regard to God, are necessary for the use of man – so that the general convenience may be consulted, and all things be done...'decently and in order' (First Corinthians 14:40)."

Although the above is stated in respect of public prayers in church, it certainly applies also to household prayers at home – such as where the family regularly meets together to eat its daily bread. This is why, in his analysis of "the Lord's Prayer" for His disciples,³⁸¹ Calvin soon went on to explain:

"In calling God our Father, we certainly plead the Name of Christ. For with what confidence could any man call God his Father? Who would have the presumption to arrogate to himself the honour of a son of God – were we not gratuitously adopted as His sons in Christ? His love towards us is so much the

³⁸⁰ *Inst.*, III:20:29.

³⁸¹ *Ib.*, III:20:36.

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greater and more excellent than that of earthly parents – the farther He surpasses all men in goodness and mercy (Isaiah 63:18).

"Earthly parents, laying aside all paternal affection, might abandon their offspring – [but] He will never abandon us (Psalm 27:10), seeing He cannot deny Himself (Second Timothy 2:13). For we have His promise: 'If you, then, being evil, know how to keep on giving good gifts to your children – how much more shall your heavenly Father keep on giving good things to those that keep on asking Him?! (Matthew 7:11)."

'Give us this day our daily bread!' In this petition, stated Calvin, "we pray in general that God would give us all things which the body requires in this sublunary state – not only food and clothing, but everything which He knows will assist us to eat our bread in peace.

"In this way, we briefly cast our care upon Him and commit ourselves to His providence – that He may feed, foster, and preserve us.... We look to Him for everything – even to a morsel of bread, and a drop of water....

"The terms 'this day'...and...'daily' lay a restraint on our immoderate desire of fleeting [away from that which is] good.... We are only enjoined to ask as much as our necessity requires, and as it were confiding for each day in our heavenly Father – Who gives us the supply of today; [and] Who will not fail us on the morrow.

"Howsoever great our abundance may be – however well-filled our cellars and granaries – we must still always ask for daily bread. For we must feel assured that all substance is nothing – unless in so far as the Lord, by pouring out His blessing, make it fruitful during its whole progress....

"We ought," declared Calvin,³⁸² "always to raise our minds upward toward God, and pray – without ceasing! Yet such is our weakness which requires to be supported – such our torpor which requires to be stimulated – that it is requisite for us to appoint special hours for this exercise: hours which are not to pass away without prayer....

"Our minds are to be occupied completely – namely: when we rise in the morning before we commence our daily work; when we sit down to food; when by the blessing of God we have taken it; and when we retire to rest." Compare too: Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

³⁸² *Ib.*, III:20:44,50.

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Indeed, added Calvin,³⁸³ "a good householder distributes meat [or food] to his household in due season." Matthew 24:25. Here, "due season" means 'at the right time' – normally at least every morning and every evening.

Again, explained Calvin:³⁸⁴ "Teachers 'are like householders' who are not only careful about their own food, but have a store laid up for the nourishment of others." See Matthew 13:52.

* * * * *

We summarize. The above are Calvin's views of the Biblical teaching anent daily family worship – especially from the time God saved Noah as a type of the Second Adam, until the moment Jesus died as the Second Adam.

As seen in our very first chapter, Calvin also clearly implied the exercise of daily family worship even before the great flood – in the homes of the first Adam, Abel, Seth, Enos and Noah. Thereafter, as seen in this present chapter, Calvin found such household devotions explicitly practised by Job and Abraham – and, by implication, also in the lives of Isaac and Jacob and Joseph.

In his *Sermons on Deuteronomy* (6:5-20 & 11:18f), Calvin stated God guides us "as a father does his children" when we "assembly every day" to call upon Him. Calvin also stated "we must talk about" the Law of God daily, "so that the father may teach his children." He added: "At their rising in the morning and at their going to bed at night, men should talk and confer about this so that their children might learn thereby" – and so that we must "exercise ourselves in that study" even as "a mother has her eye always upon the child which she brings up."

In his *Sermons on Second Samuel* (6:18-20), Calvin preached "that fathers of families...ought to be careful to do their duty in governing those who are placed under their authority. He implied the same in his *Commentary on the Psalms* and elsewhere, in respect of Psalms 1:2 & 55:17 & 133:1f. Indeed, he also referred to Jeremiah 10:25 and Daniel 9:3-10 – and, in his comments upon the predictions in Zechariah 12:10-14 and Malachi 1:6-11 & 4:5-6, he clearly implied daily family worship also during New Testament times and among Christians.

It is, however, especially in the Lord's Prayer of Jesus Christ the Second Adam that we see the need for daily family worship. There, when petitioning God for our daily bread especially at the family table, Calvin remarked that Christians should pray:

³⁸³ *Ib.*, IV:16:31.

³⁸⁴ *Comm.* on Matt. 13:51f.

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"O Lord, since our life every day needs new supplies – may it please You to grant them to us without interruption!" He then added: "Howsoever great our abundance may be – however well-filled our cellars and granaries – we must still always ask for daily bread...."

"It is requisite for us to appoint special hours for this exercise: hours which are not to pass away without prayer.... Our minds are to be occupied completely – namely: when we rise in the morning before we commence our daily work; when we sit down to food; when by the blessing of God we have taken it; and when we retire to rest."

This is what Calvin said of the Lord's Prayer – which was instituted before Calvary. The question, however, is whether all of this has now been abolished – 'dispensationalistically' – after Calvary? That is the question which will now be considered – in our next chapter.

VII

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP: JOHN CALVIN (PART TWO)

In our first chapter, we set out *inter alia* Calvin's views on daily family worship from creation till the flood. In our last chapter, we gave his convictions about this obligation from the time of Job down till the institution of the Lord's Prayer for Christ's disciples by Jesus Himself.

It is rather incongruous for hyperdispensationalists to suggest that also the petition 'Give us this day our daily bread!' in the Lord's Prayer, was intended for Jews – and should therefore never be prayed by true Christians after Calvary. For it is, in fact, a petition which the Lord Jesus prescribed precisely for His **Christian** disciples. "After this manner therefore," He commanded them, "**you** are to **pray**" – namely: "Our heavenly Father! Give us, today, our **daily** bread!" Matthew 6:9-11.

* * * * *

On Pentecost Sunday, the inspired Apostle Peter told deeply mournful and sorrowing Jews: "Repent and be baptized! ... To you is the promise [of redemption] – and to your children!"

As already seen,³⁸⁵ this fulfilled the great prediction in Zechariah 12:10-14 that – after the outpouring of the Spirit – each family would keep on repenting apart. Calvin now noted how those early Christians and their children, 'day by day...breaking bread at home..., took their food with gladness and singleness of heart [in] praising God.'" Acts 2:39-46f.

The above passage may also suitably be paraphrased as follows: "Repent and be baptized! ... For the promise is to you and your children... Then, even every day – also when breaking bread at home – they partook of food...while praising God."

At Acts 2:46, Calvin made a striking comment on Luke's words "also when breaking bread at home" (or *kloontes te kat' oikon artou*). Calvin stated³⁸⁶ that earlier, at verse 42, the somewhat similar-sounding (but actually different) expression "the breach of the bread" (or *teei klasei tou artou*) had sacramental significance for the congregation.

³⁸⁵Nn. 182f & 375f cf. J. Calvin: *The Acts of the Apostles*, Eerdmans ed., I p. 88.

³⁸⁶*Ib.*, p. 89.

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Even there in Acts 2:42, however, we ourselves think that this expression "the breach of the bread" may well refer to nothing more than congregational suppers. Significantly, also Calvin rightly denied that the somewhat divergent expression "also when breaking bread at home" (later in verse 46) means anything other than a non-sacramental eating of ordinary food in every Christian dwelling.

Indeed, one should compare Acts 2:46's *kloontes...arton* with 27:35's *arton...klasas*. In the latter case the context of "breaking bread" before pagan navigators, was clearly only nutritional and in no way sacramental. In all probability, the same should be presumed of the similar expression "breaking bread" also in the former case at Acts 2:46.

Yet earlier, in Acts 2:41-42, much of the context is clearly sacramental (and altogether ecclesiastical): "Then they that gladly received his word" – namely Peter's public sermon – "were baptized. And the same day, there were added unto them [*viz.* unto the previous members of the Christian Church] about three thousand persons.

"Then they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and the fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread, and in prayers." Too, even in verse 47b, we read: "Then the Lord added those who were being saved daily to the Church" – *tee_i ekkleesia_i*. There, the context is once again similarly ecclesiastical.

However, in Acts 2:46-47a, the different context – though still one of worship – is neither sacramental nor ecclesiastical, but social and domestic. For it relates that the already-baptized and already-communing Christians "even every day...also when breaking bread at home" partook of food (*trophees*) with gladness and simplicity of heart, while praising God" there *etc.* Nor do the words 'at home' here mean 'from one house to the next.' Instead, these words here simply mean 'even domestically' (*te kat' oikon*).

Accordingly, Luke's words – "even every day...also when breaking bread at home...while praising God" – are simply describing how each Christian family 'broke bread' or ate its own "food" (or *trophees*) with thanksgiving in its own home daily. This was, of course, usually done by each family all on its own.

Sometimes, however, it may very well have been done also with certain other Christian visitors being present at the time. But the words are certainly not teaching that all those Christians each day 'broke bread' and, still less, celebrated Holy Communion first in one particular home before then going off and doing the same in the next home – over and over again; day after day; and at least once daily (if not many times each day).

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How could these words possibly bear such a bizarre meaning? For that would mean the whole congregation of more than three thousand members (verse 41) would then have been cramming itself day by day into one tiny house after the other, for the purpose of celebrating the Lord's Supper or having a congregational meal (or both) at least once daily!

Still less could it mean that this whole huge congregation – immediately after its first celebration of the sacrament and/or its enjoyment of a congregational meal in one tiny private home – promptly moved off into yet another small house for the same purpose or purposes all over again. Daily – if not many times every day!

These words have no reference to the celebration of the sacrament (nor even to congregational suppers). Instead, they rather indicate simply regular meals by families and/or their friends in private households.

Nor do the words indicate that even small groups of otherwise serious Christians frivolously frolicked around non-sacramentally from one jolly banquet to the next. They do not indicate first partying in one Christian home, and then right after that moving on to the next party in the next Christian home, and so on – at least once daily, if not several times each day. No!

The reference is instead to each Christian family – whether usually alone, or whether sometimes indeed joined by other Christians – eating its own bread or food, and holding its own praise alias its own family worship, in its own home – every day, or even several times daily. See too: Acts 5:42; 10:2f; 17:11; 20:20; First Corinthians 11:22a; 14:35.

For here in Acts, explained Calvin,³⁸⁷ "Luke indicates" that these Christians (and their children) "did not show the signs of true piety only in public.... The course and tenor of their private lives [too], was of the same kind. For whereas some think that in this passage the breaking of bread means the Holy Supper – this seems to me far removed from Luke's meaning. He indicates to us [by the words 'breaking bread at home'] that they used to eat together." See Acts 10:2-10 *cf.* First Corinthians 11:22a.

³⁸⁷ *Comm.* on Acts 2:46f.

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"Some join 'gladness' and 'singleness of heart' with the 'praise of God'; and the context makes this probable.... There can be no singleness of heart in praising God which is not true of every part of life. It is therefore certain that it is mentioned here, with the meaning that the believers practised it everywhere.... Luke...now...shows the manner of life practised by the faithful, so that we may learn by their example to practise a thrifty fellowship in our way of life.... The Lord increased the Church daily!"

* * * * *

It is clear that Calvin favoured the maintenance of morning and evening devotions in daily family worship also among Christians. Thus, in his comments on Acts 3:1 (*cf.* 10:2f), he declared:³⁸⁸ "The Lord appointed that the Jews should offer sacrifice evening and morning (Exodus 29:41). By this practice, they were taught to begin and end the day by calling upon God and worshipping Him (Numbers 28:4)....

"Now in that the Lord desired the people of old to observe stated hours, we gather that the Church cannot do without a fixed discipline. Even today, if our excessive laziness did not prevent it, it would be valuable for us to have such meetings daily."

At some length – Calvin discussed the worship practices of the Italian, Cornelius of Caesarea. Under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Biblical author Luke declares that even long before ever meeting the Apostle Peter – the foreign soldier Cornelius already feared God with all his household and prayed to the Lord always – apparently also at set times each day. Acts 10:1-3,24,30-33f.

Calvin here commented³⁸⁹ that the chronicler "Luke shows what kind of man this Cornelius was.... He was a soldier whose piety towards God was so great, and whose dealings with men were so honest and considerate.... The virtues of Cornelius are all the more deserving of praise, because in the course of military life – which was then very corrupt – he yet worshipped God conscientiously.... He was 'devout and a God-fearer'.... As a good family head, he took pains to instruct the family. He prayed to God continually....

"Cornelius excelled in the virtues in which the integrity of the godly consists.... Every aspect of his life was ordered according to the rule which God lays down for us.... The Law is contained in two tables. In the first place Luke commends

³⁸⁸ *Ib.*, 92 (on Acts 3:1).

³⁸⁹ *Comm.* on Acts 2-7,24.

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the piety of Cornelius.... Then he proceeds to the second part – his exercising the duties of charity towards men....

"Luke counts 'the fear of God and prayer' as fruits and proofs of piety and the worship of God, and he is quite right.... Cornelius prayed continually.... He also worshipped God spiritually – whenever he exercised himself in prayer."

Continued Calvin: "Let each of us take the example of Cornelius – and encourage himself to persevere in prayer...with all his house! ... Cornelius had a church in his household.

"And certainly..., the true worshipper of God will not allow Him to be banished out of his house. For how preposterous it is for him to insist on his own right of obedience from wife, children, menservants and maidservants – but yet indifferently allow contempt for God.

"Of course, it will sometimes happen that a godly man has not even his wife falling in with him.... But he, who is set over others, must take care by every means that he assumes his own authority from God.... There is nothing more fitting than to dedicate everything that we have – as well as ourselves – to God.

"Therefore, if a godly man has sons who are different from himself; or a wife who is badly behaved; or servants who are worthless and dishonest – let him not turn a blind eye; and let him not allow his house to be defiled by his own sloth! In the case of Cornelius, it is not only his earnestness that is commended, but the blessing of God – as a result of which he had his household yielding to him in godliness....

"He established the family in the fear of God.... The worship of God is proved by prayers.... In those days, of course, it was men's custom to divide the day into twelve hours from sunrise to sunset.... It was in the full light of day when the angel appeared....

"The angel attributes the reason why the Lord thinks Cornelius deserving of the full light of the Gospel, to this – that He has heard his prayers clearly.... Cornelius obtained fuller knowledge of Christ from his prayers and alms.... His having God well-disposed and favourable to his alms and prayers, was already dependent on his faith.... Cornelius could not have prayed, if he had not been a believer....

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"Cornelius...had also imbued...his household servants with the fear of the Lord.... Luke praises Cornelius's attitude.... He eagerly awaited Peter's arrival.... He wished his friends and kinsmen to share the faith with him." Thus Calvin's comments on the regular family worship in the home of Cornelius – even before Peter met him.

* * * * *

Later in the Book of Acts (17:11), Luke describes the Hebrews in Beroea. He says that they 'were nobler than those in Thessalonica – in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily.' Here, John Calvin commented³⁹⁰ that "Luke says...they belonged to the chief families.... They were ready and eager in their desire to receive the Gospel.... They strengthened their faith daily, by a diligent inquiry...."

"Certainly, this is the way to enter into the faith.... For many who show enthusiasm at the start, immediately fall into lazy ways and, so long as they are touched by no concern to make progress – they lose any seed of faith they may have...."

"Accordingly, today, when so many furious enemies set themselves in opposition to the faithful Minister of Christ, let us realize that...Satan will never cease tormenting those whom he knows to be serving Christ faithfully – either with open war, or by insidious means, or even with domestic struggles!" Thus Calvin. His two expressions "strengthened their faith daily" and "domestic struggles" – are here particularly relevant for the subject of daily household worship.

Indeed, this is one of the reasons why the first-century Christians "even every day...also when breaking bread at home, partook of food...while praising God" there *etc.* Acts 2:46-47. This is also why Paul taught and urged that the Church's Ministers should "daily...in every house...not cease to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Acts 5:42.

Indeed, this is also why not just Preachers alias Ministers of the Word but even the non-preaching Ruling Elders should indeed teach – both 'publicly, and from house to house.' See Acts 20:17,20,28 & First Peter 5:1-3 & James 5:14-15. For Paul too, commented Calvin, "taught not only all in the assembly; but [taught also] individuals in their homes."³⁹¹

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³⁹⁰ *Comm.* on Acts 17:11f.

³⁹¹ *Comm.* on Acts 20:20.

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Also First Corinthians seems to imply regular family worship – among the Christians in the very heart of Greece. Speaking of the relations of husbands to wives, Calvin commented³⁹² here that "prayer...ought to be made not only daily, but also continually.... The husband is the head of the wife, and she is her husband's companion in every way....

"The faith of a Christian husband or wife sanctifies a marriage.... The ungodliness of one of the parents does not prevent the children from being born holy.... The children of believers are set apart from others...so that they are regarded as holy.... The Lord admits them to His Church – by His Word....

"It is a great and wonderful blessing if a wife wins over her husband.... The believing wife...may, by her goodness of life, lead her husband back to the way.... Paul warns them...that they must not enter on the yoke of marriage with unbelievers.... They should enter...reverently, and in the fear of the Lord.... Each person has a home of his own, which is intended for him to eat in and drink in....

"Let the women keep silence in the churches! ... If they want to learn anything, let them ask their own menfolk at home!' ... He," says Calvin of Paul, "instructs them [the women] to make their inquiries [anent religion] in private" – at home; from their husbands; and indeed also and especially during daily family worship.

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In Ephesians 5:14 to 6:18, Paul says a great deal of much importance for daily family worship. 'Awake, you who keep on sleeping – and arise! ... Christ shall keep on giving you light.... Keep on redeeming the time, because the days are evil! ... Keep on understanding what is the will of the Lord! ... Keep on speaking to yourselves in psalm and hymns and spiritual songs! Keep on making melody in your heart to the Lord! Keep on giving thanks always, for all things, unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

'Keep on submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God! Wives, keep on submitting yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord! ... Husbands, keep on loving your wives even as Christ too loved the Church and gave Himself for it so that He might keep on sanctifying and cleansing it...by the Word! ... Children, keep on obeying your parents in the Lord! ... Keep on honouring your father and mother...so that it may continue to be well with you and so that you may keep on living long in the land!'

'Fathers,' concludes the Apostle Paul, 'do not keep on provoking your children...but do keep on bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the

³⁹²Comm. on I Cor. 7:5f,14,16,39 & 11:22 & 14:35.

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Lord! ... Keep on taking up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God! Keep on praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit – and keep on watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all!

In his *Commentary on Ephesians* (5:14 to 6:18), Calvin made several remarks on the above passage which are of great significance to daily family worship. Explained the genius of Geneva:³⁹³

"This is the ordinary message which ought every day to be heard.... I have no doubt that he [Paul] alludes to the prophecies which foretell Christ's Kingdom – such as that of Isaiah (60:1): 'Arise, shine, O Jerusalem, for your light has come *et cetera!* Let us therefore endeavour, as far as lies in us, to rouse the sleeping...so that we may bring them to the light of Christ! ... He adds, 'And Christ shall give you light'....

"He who exercises himself day and night in the meditation of the Law, will easily triumph over the difficulties which Satan can put in his way.... We ought constantly to be exercised in remembering...the will of God.... 'Giving thanks always'...means...a pleasure which ought never to bore us by custom; an exercise of which we ought never to weary.... He warns believers that it will be ungodly and disgraceful laziness, if they shall not – all through their life – study and practise the praises of God....

"Society consists of groups which are like yokes in which there is a mutual obligation of parties. The first yoke is the marriage between husband and wife; the second yoke binds parents and children; the third connects masters and servants.... There is a daily progress....

"The Law of Nature...is received by all nations.... The obedience of children is decreed by the authority of God.... The promises annexed to the Commandments are intended to attract us so that we may obey the more cheerfully.... The promise is of a long life.....

"Parents, in their turn, are exhorted not to irritate their children.... Paul goes on to say, 'Let them be cherished kindly!' ... Keep them in the discipline of the Lord, and correct them also when they go astray!"

Paul, continued Calvin, then "compares the chief instruments of warfare, a sword and a shield, to faith and the Word of God.... Having put armour on the Ephesians, he now enjoins them to fight by prayer. This is the true method. To

³⁹³ J. Calvin: *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, pp. 201f.

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call upon God, is the chief exercise of faith and hope.... He exhorts them to persevere in prayer....

"He tells us that we must press on cheerfully.... With unabated ardour, we must continue our prayers...'at all seasons'... Paul therefore desires us to let no season pass, without remembering to pray.... There is not a moment of our life at which our wants ought not to urge us to prayer..., praying without ceasing!"

In his *Sermons on Ephesians* (5:22f & 6:1f), Calvin added³⁹⁴ that "the husband is not his wife's head to oppress her.... Seeing he is the head, he must needs have discretion in himself to guide his wife and his household. And what is the way to bring that to pass – but to use kindness and mildness, and discreetly to support his wife in respect of the frailty which he knows to be in her, even as St. Peter warn us [First Peter 3:7]....

"The principal thing is that in the first place God should be invoked.... If husbands consider that God holds people's hearts in His hand and bows them as He pleases, and consequently pray Him to give them grace and power to win over their wives – so that the wives may agree with them, and humble themselves – then they will perceive that God works on their behalf....

"St. Paul has shown us that we must be subject to fathers and mothers.... On the other hand, he shows what is the duty of fathers and mothers towards their children, namely...to temper their characters...[and] nourish them in the fear of God [Colossians 3:21]. By this word 'nourish' St. Paul means that they should deal gently with them, and show themselves loving towards them.

"However, this word is sauced (so to speak) with the discipline and correction of God. There is then on the one hand, 'nourishment'; that is to say, kindness and gentleness – and on the other hand, 'correction and discipline'.... Therefore, when children are so far astray as to set light by their fathers and mothers – God will have them despatched out of the World. For they are monsters, and an infection to pollute the whole Earth!"

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Paul certainly implies the promotion of regular family worship also among the Colossian Christians. He enjoins: 'Keep on being thankful! Let the Word of Christ keep on dwelling in you richly! ... Keep on teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs! Keep on singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord! ... Keep on doing all in the Name of the Lord Jesus! Keep on giving thanks to...the Father, by Him!

³⁹⁴London: Banner of Truth, 1979, pp. 570 & 622f.

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'Wives, keep on submitting yourselves unto your own husbands – as it is fit in the Lord! Husbands, keep on loving your wives – and do not be bitter against them! Children, keep on obeying your parents in all things – for this is well-pleasing to the Lord! Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, lest they become discouraged!' Thus, in Colossians 3:15-21, says the Apostle Paul.

That Apostle also to the Colossians, commented Calvin,³⁹⁵ "wants the teaching of the Gospel to be familiar to them.... Paul here addresses men and women of all ranks. Nor would he only have them take a slight taste of the 'Word of Christ.' But he says that it should 'dwell' in them: that is, that it should have a settled abode – and that...they may aim to advance and increase more and more every day....

Commands Paul: 'Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands! ... Husbands, love your wives! ... Children, obey your parents! ... Fathers, do not provoke your children!' Commented Calvin: "He prohibits parents from an immoderate harshness – lest their children should be so cowed as to be incapable of receiving any training (*disciplinae liberalis*). For we see, from daily experience, the advantage of a liberal education (*ingenua educatio*)."

However: that training or 'discipline' and education must start at home – and especially during daily family worship! Hence, Calvin also remarked³⁹⁶ of the Apostle Paul: "'I will sing with the spirit; and I will sing with the understanding also' (First Corinthians 14:15).

"In like manner, he says to the Colossians, 'teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord' (Colossians 3:16). In the former passage, he enjoins us to sing with the voice and the heart. In the latter, he commends spiritual songs by which the pious mutually edify each other" – including: wives; husbands; children; parents; and fathers! See Colossians 3:16-21.

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In First Timothy 2:8f & 3:1f, Paul enjoins: 'I therefore want men everywhere to pray.... Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection! ... I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man.... Notwithstanding, she shall be happy in rearing children – if they continue in faith and charity and holiness....

³⁹⁵ *Comm.* on Col. 3:16f.

³⁹⁶ *Inst.* III:20:32.

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'If a man desire the office of an Overseer, he desires a good work. An Overseer then must be blameless, the husband of one wife..., one who keeps on ruling his own house[hold] well, and who continues to keep his children in subjection with all seriousness. For if a man does not know how to rule his own house[hold] – how shall he take care of the Church of God?'

In his *Commentary on Paul's First Epistle to Timothy* (2:11f to 3:4), Calvin insisted³⁹⁷ that "Paul is not taking from women their duty to instruct their family." To the contrary. Here "an Apostle of Christ...not only exhort[s] women to give their attention to bearing children." He also "urge[s] this upon them as a godly and holy work.... The Apostle is dealing here not merely with bearing children, but with...bringing them up....

"Having just forbidden the teaching office [in the Church] to women..., not even men should be admitted to it without discrimination.... Bishops [or Overseers] must not be compelled to celibacy, because marriage is a highly proper state for all believers.... Paul does not require of a Bishop that he should be without experience in the ordinary life of men, but rather that he should be a good and well-tested family man....

"He explains this by saying that a man who does not know how to rule his own family, is unsuited to govern in the Church of God.... The man who here wins the Apostle's approval is...he who has learnt to rule his family with wholesome discipline. He refers especially to 'children' – who may be expected to reflect the disposition of their father.

"Thus, it would be a great disgrace for a Bishop to have sons who lead a dissolute and scandalous life.... He [Paul] touches on the chief part of family life.... A Bishop's children should not be unruly and disobedient....

"It is quite clear that a man who is not fit to rule his own family, will be quite incapable of governing a whole people. Besides the fact that he obviously lacks the necessary qualities – what authority could a man have among a people, when his own family life brings him into contempt?"

In his *Sermons upon the First Epistle to Timothy* (3:4f), John Calvin insisted³⁹⁸ of "the Ministers" (of the Word and Sacraments) that "they must govern their own houses well, and have their children subject with all reverence.... A man may in no wise be entertained to govern the flock of God – unless he can behave himself constantly in his own person. It is true that St. Paul thinks this is not

³⁹⁷ J. Calvin: *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964f, pp. 217-27.

³⁹⁸ J. Calvin: *Sermons on Timothy and Titus*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983, pp. 282f.

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enough.... He also adds 'his family.' Why? The family of a believer must be, as it were, a little church....

"A poor man living with his wife and children and servants, ought to be like a public governor – in his house. But Christians must go further. Every master of a house has to know that God has set him in that place, to know how to govern both wife and children and servants – so that God may be honoured amongst them, and all of them do Him homage....

"It is a good token when men behave themselves so quietly in their own houses, and can rule it so well – that they live honestly, and be not evil reported of.... This is St. Paul's meaning.... He speaks also of children, as he will afterward speak of wives....

"Now – he touchest but the children. And why so? For he that will do his duty well, being a shepherd of a congregation, must be as it were a father of all the faithful. Now if a man cannot govern two or three children which are in his house, yea [if] when they are his own children he still cannot keep them in subjection but shall have them deaf to whatsoever he says – how can he govern those that are far off and be as it were men unknown to him?"

The same applies when a man cannot control his wife. Explained Calvin: "How can he keep men in awe – when his own wife will not be subject to him? And therefore, let us not think it a strange matter if it be requisite in all shepherds that they be well-able ruling householders – and know what it is to govern children well....

"When a preacher shall go up into the pulpit, and cry out against wicked living, and say the youth are past all shame [and that] there is no modesty in them – if his own children behave themselves worse than other[s] or at least be as bad as the best [of others] – do they not mock God and His doctrine? Yet it is not enough to condemn the children. But we must condemn the fathers also, when they permit their children to do worse than all other[s].

"So then, whensoever the preachers must go up into the pulpit, and be at home in their own houses – let them ask well and consider this: 'Well, I am going to show other men the way.... I must begin with my own self! For if I will lead other[s] to salvation but be out of the way myself, what will become of me? Moreover, if I would show men and women how they should govern themselves; if I would reprove their faults; if my house be so far out of square that men may mock at it – what case am I in?'

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"Again, I too have children to rule. For both great and small, the one as well as the other, must be taught by the doctrine which I bear. 'Now if my children be dissolute – what will the world say? This is what we have to bear away, first of all.'"

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In First Timothy 4:1f, the Apostle attacks the demonic doctrines which forbid marriage and meats 'which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything God created, is good – and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. If you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, Paul advised Timothy, "you shall be a good Minister of Jesus Christ – nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine.'

In his *Commentary on First Timothy* (4:3f), Calvin here insisted:³⁹⁹ "It gives the greatest joy to all godly men, to know that all the kinds of food they eat are put into their hands by the Lord – so that to enjoy them is blameless and quite legitimate.... God created food 'to be received' – that is, in order that we should enjoy it....

"He [the Apostle Paul] adds 'with thanksgiving' – for the only recompense we can make to God for His liberality, is a testimony of our thanks." There is thus a "sacrifice of praise which God specially requires us to offer Him" – especially on behalf of our family, when eating daily meals at the family table.

Calvin continued: "Prayer is added, for we not only ask for our **daily** bread according to Christ's commandments – but we also offer thanksgiving for His goodness.... Paul therefore has good reason to connect rightful enjoyment with the Word – by which alone we regain what was lost to us in Adam....

"The use of all God's gifts is unclean – unless it is accompanied by true knowledge and supplication of God's Name.... To sit down at table without any prayer and, when satisfied, to go off without any remembrance of God – is a way of eating fit only for brute beasts.... Sanctification is required, for ordinary food.... We bless the food that we eat to nourish our body, in order to receive it legitimately....

"He [Paul] thus exhorts Timothy to remind them frequently of these things.... He later repeats this a second and a third time. For they are things that should be remembered frequently.... It is as if he had said: 'Having been instructed rightly in the faith from your infancy – and having, so to speak, sucked in sound doctrine

³⁹⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 240f.

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with your mother's milk; and having made till now continual progress in it – take pains, by a faithful ministry, to prove that you are still the same!"

In his *Sermons on First Timothy* (4:1f), Calvin here declared⁴⁰⁰ that "men should feed...and nourish themselves.... Therefore, let us learn to use those things which God has ordained for our use – in such a way that we direct our lives wholly according to His will....

"Let us mark that which Saint Paul says – that God ordains the meats for them that are believers! ... If we will use God's creatures aright, we must cast our eyes on Him Who is the Author of them.... We must receive God's gifts with thanksgiving.... Let us take them with thanksgiving! That is to say, let us dedicate ourselves wholly to God and know that it is He Who is our nursing Father – and give Him thanks for all His benefits that He bestows upon us!

"Let us never come to the table, without calling upon God's Name! Let us never rise from the table, without giving thanks! For it is certain that all those who eat...but do not pray to God – are for the most part worse than beasts.... We were not able to eat one morsel but it would be accursed before God – did we not acknowledge Him Who gives us the meats, to the end we should serve and honour Him and confess that He calls us to Him, showing Himself [to be] a pitying Father towards us so that we truly be His children, submitting ourselves quietly to Him and to His Word.... He made us and placed us in the World, for that end."

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In First Timothy 5:9f, Paul states that no widows should be chosen for the ecclesiastical office of Deaconess – except from such who are at least 'sixty years old'; who have been 'the wife of one man'; who are 'well reported of for good works'; who have 'brought up children'; who have 'washed the feet of the saints'; who have 'relieved the afflicted'; and who have 'diligently followed every good work.' Hence: 'refuse the younger widows! For...they want to [re]marry.... I therefore wish the younger women to [re]marry; to bear children; [and] to guide the home!'

In his *Commentary on First Timothy* 5:9f, Calvin stated⁴⁰¹ that qualified applicants will be "such as labour" and have shown "diligence in bringing up children." On the other hand, "younger widows...should be excluded" from the office of Deaconess. For, as Paul declares: 'I desire...that the younger widows

⁴⁰⁰ *Ib.*, pp. 360f.

⁴⁰¹ *Ib.*, pp. 256f.

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marry.' In that way, explained the careful Calvin, "their lives will be...acceptable to God – if they care for their household" and get involved in "rearing offspring."

In his *Sermons on First Timothy 5:9f*, Calvin preached⁴⁰² that it is only "when the widows are such" as meet the above-mentioned qualifications that they may be accepted as Deaconesses – or "else not.... For these widows had a church office, as we see by the last chapter to the Romans [16:1f], where he [Paul] commends a widow whom he calls [*Diakonos* alias] 'Servant of the church of Cenchrea'.... He said also that such [widows] as had children to bring up, should not be taken [as Seaconesses].... Widows which have children, must govern them – and employ themselves therein....

"The chiefest point is for the good instruction that the elder [widows] must give the younger [widows]. When God has given a man children, it is not only that he should have charge to give them bread to eat – but good instruction is the chiefest [need].... We perceive a good and right simplicity – as when a woman has brought up her children and fostered them and instructed them in the fear of God.... Saint Paul shows that women cannot be fit to serve God and the Church, unless they have been good housewives in their houses and have taken pains to nourish their children....

"Now when St. Paul commands Timothy to refuse younger widows, it is not to dishonour them...if they not be chosen to office.... His mind is not that younger widows shall not be put in office because of their age, but to prevent offences which might arise [otherwise]....

"Paul takes order that the young widows who are yet marriageable, should marry – and, if God give them children, nurse them and bring them up themselves.... Their housewifery will keep them at home. It is therein that they must serve God, and them whom God has bound them unto, such as their husbands and their children....

"A poor handicraftsman and his wife, when they are together, have much ado to nourish their children.... We see what the Holy Ghost says.... God dwells rather in those households than in cloisters....

"God will reign in a little household...where the husband and the wife give themselves to do their duty. There shall be greater holiness and drawing nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven in such a poor house – than there shall be in a cloister....

"When St. Paul says that the women must bring forth children, he comprehends under this word all the pains that women suffer in nourishing their

⁴⁰² *Ib.*, pp. 475-95.

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children.... He means also that they should do the duty of mothers.... If a woman should give herself to be at the church all day long, and to pray and sing – this kind of life would God not like so well as if, being married, she were very willing patiently to do her duty in nourishing her children; in watching over them; in nurturing them; and taking all pains and care to instruct them....

"Now Saint Paul examines his own meaning better. He says, 'married women must govern the house.' Thereby he means that which we touched on before – that women must always think upon that whereunto God has called them....

"When man and woman are joined together in true faith and with a good conscience, it is God Who couples them together.... Our Lord...will have both the marriage and the pains that women take in governing their families and all suchlike matters – to glorify Him."

In his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (12:8 & 16:1f), Calvin said⁴⁰³ of Paul that "when he speaks of those who show mercy (*eleountas*), he means widows and other ministers who were appointed to take care of the sick.... He first begins by commending Phoebe, the bearer of the Epistle, on account of her office....

"The character of the ministry which he is discussing, is also described in First Timothy 5:10. The poor were supported out of the public funds of the Church, and were looked after by persons charged with that duty. For this last, widows were chosen who – since they were free from domestic duties and not hindered by children – desired to dedicate themselves wholly to God for religious service....

"The Apostle therefore accuses them of breach of faith if, having taken on an office, they later renounce it (First Timothy 5:11). Since they were to live a single life, he forbids them to be chosen if they are less than sixty years of age."

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, when discussing Romans 12:8, the great Protestant and Presbyterian Reformer John Calvin stated⁴⁰⁴ that "the care of the poor was committed to...those who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and the sick. Such were the widows of whom he makes mention in...First Timothy 5:10. For there was no public office which women could discharge, save that of devoting themselves to the service of the poor. This certainly ought to be admitted....

⁴⁰³ J. Calvin: *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and the Thessalonians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961, pp. 270 & 320f.

⁴⁰⁴ *Op. cit.*, IV:3:9 & IV:13:18f.

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"Paul says that widows who marry after having once undertaken a public office, 'cast off their first faith' (First Timothy 5:12)... Paul says that by such desires, they grow wanton against Christ.... Those widows who were admitted to a public ministry, came under an obligation of perpetual celibacy....

"Deaconesses were appointed...to perform a public ministry of the Church toward the poor.... They did not vow celibacy so that they might thereafter exhibit abstinence from marriage as a kind of worship rendered to God, but only so that they might be freer from encumbrance in executing their office....

"They did not vow [thus] on attaining adolescence or in the bloom of life, and so afterwards learn by too-late-experience over what a precipice they had plunged themselves. But, after they were thought to have surmounted all danger, they took a vow" to become a celibate Deaconess. "It was unlawful to allow women to take a vow of continence before their sixtieth year, since the Apostle admits such only [to become Deaconesses] – and enjoins the younger to marry and beget children."

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In Second Timothy 1:3-5, Paul declares that he himself had served God from his forefathers. Similarly, he further remembered the faith which (he was persuaded) was also in Timothy: the faith which had first dwelt in his grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice.

In his *Commentary on Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy*, Calvin explained how Paul "praised Timothy for the faith in which he [Timothy] had been reared from childhood. He [Paul] exhorts him to persevere faithfully.... Next, he gives a brief summary of his Gospel – and commands Timothy to hand it on to others, and to take care to transmit it to posterity."⁴⁰⁵

Paul then seems to have been reminiscing about the daily family worship with which he himself had formerly been raised. Because Timothy had enjoyed a somewhat similar training in his own home, Paul reminds him too about that.

Calvin here observed that "Paul was not descended from idolaters, but from the children of Abraham who worshipped the true God. We know how, in John 4:22, Christ...declares that the Jews alone observe[d] the right method of worshipping God."

Paul declares: 'I thank God, Whom I serve from my forefathers..., how unceasing is my remembrance of you [Timothy] – in my supplications night and

⁴⁰⁵ *Comm. on II Tim., Theme, & Comm. on II Tim. 1:3-5.*

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day' (alias 'in my daily and nightly supplications' or 'in my morning prayers and my evening prayers' every day). Indeed, as regards those Pauline supplications, Calvin commented: "If anyone takes 'daily and nightly prayers' to mean prayers Paul was in the habit of offering at stated hours, there is nothing absurd in that view."

Paul next, commented Calvin, "commends both Timothy's faith, and that of his grandmother and mother.... For, when anyone has made a good and brave beginning, his progress should give him courage to advance further.... Examples from his own family circle are stronger enticements to him to press on. Thus, he [Paul] sets before him [Timothy] his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice....

"He was reared in his infancy in such a way that he could suck in godliness along with his mother's milk.... Timothy from his boyhood...was so imbued with reverence and faith in God, that it was a living seed – which later increased and grew."

In his *Sermons on Second Timothy* (1:5), Calvin preached:⁴⁰⁶ "This must serve as an instruction for us all.... Paul, to confirm Timothy the better, wishes him further to follow on in that good race which he had entered.

"For his grandmother and his mother had a true faith.... If the woman keep herself to the Word of God; if she have Jesus Christ for her Head before the angels of paradise – she shall be better than all the men that so run astray.... These women had a right faith....

"These women in the time of darkness, when there was nothing in Judea but confusion, ceased not to cleave fast to the faith of God.... When Saint Paul says to Timothy that he knows also that the faith dwells in him – he is speaking...of the faith which he had even from his childhood. For God was so gracious to him, that he followed the right side and clave to his mother....

"Why then does Saint Paul call him back to the faith which he had even from his childhood? To stir him up so much the more to follow that good doctrine wherein he had been instructed even from the beginning!

⁴⁰⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 682-84.

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"And hereby we are warned that if we have been nourished in the pure religion from our childhood – our fault will be so much the worse if we disorder ourselves and turn aside.... When God has called us even from our childhood to that pure doctrine, if we become men and forsake all and change our minds – what condemnation will there be over our heads!"

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Soon thereafter, Paul again reminds Timothy of the latter's former spiritual growth – from infant faith to adult faith – while previously being raised in his mother's godly home. Enjoins the Apostle: 'Remain in the things which you have learned and been assured about, knowing from whom you have learned them!' Second Timothy 3:14.

Here, Paul obviously means that Timothy had learned most of those things – precisely while growing up in his own godly mother's family home. For, in the very next sentence, Paul goes on to say:

'From fetushood [*apo brephous*] you have learned the Holy Scriptures which are powerful to make you wise as to salvation – through faith in Jesus Christ. Every Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching...[and] for instruction..., so that God's man may become complete – having been equipped, fully, for every good work!'

Here, on Second Timothy 3:15, Calvin commented:⁴⁰⁷ "The fact that he [Timothy] had been accustomed from his boyhood to read the Scriptures, was also a powerful urge to fidelity. For this long-established habit can make a man much better prepared to meet any kind of deception.

"It was a wise care that was taken in ancient times, to make sure that those who were intended for the Ministry of the Word should from their boyhood be instructed in the solid doctrine of godliness, and should drink deeply of the Sacred Writings – so that, when they came to fulfil their office, they should not be untried apprentices. Thus, if anyone has acquired from his youth a knowledge of the Scriptures – he should count it a special blessing of God."

In his *Sermons on the Second Epistle to Timothy* (3:14f), John Calvin preached⁴⁰⁸ that "Saint Paul shows us in this place that when we have profited well in the school of God and taken a good root in His Word, then...we may be able to stand fast and make it good.... St. Paul...does not barely will Timothy to be courageous.... But he says 'Abide in that which you have learned!' ... Seeing

⁴⁰⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 329 (*Comm.* on II Tim. 3:15).

⁴⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp. 922-24.

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God has been gracious to you thus, to take you unto Himself; seeing you have His Word – you must enter into battle boldly!"

Calvin's sermon then continued: "St. Paul, after that he had spoken of Timothy's upbringing, adds that God has appointed him keeper of the doctrine. He adds forthwith that Timothy even from his childhood had learned the Holy Scripture.... God, of His gracious goodness, made him follow the faith of his mother and of his grandmother – as we saw before.... Therefore he had been brought up faithfully – and instructed in the doctrine of God and in true religion even from his mother's breasts....

"It should be observed amongst the Christians, and to keep good seed in the Church – that they [who] might seem to be fit to teach, should be exercised in the Holy Scripture and be practised in it even from their childhood.... They that have received true and pure doctrine even from the beginning – what are they bound to do? Are they not much more bound to God? Yes, verily!

"See! There is a child here who has been baptized in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.... Therefore, let us mark well that Saint Paul upbraids all those who from their childhood have been instructed rightly! If it so fall out [that] they fall away – they shall be less able to excuse themselves.... They deserve double condemnation – seeing they fall away from the doctrine wherein they had been instructed so long ago, and should have been very well confirmed in it! And this is precisely spoken of the youth that has been instructed in the Gospel."

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In Titus 1:5-11, Paul enjoins the ordination of 'Overseers in every city.' Such were to 'be blameless; the husband of one wife; having faithful children not accused of riot nor being unruly. For an Overseer must be blameless.'

He must 'be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince [or convict] the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped – who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not.... Therefore, rebuke them sharply – so that they may become sound in the faith!'

In his *Commentary on Titus* (1:6f), Calvin stated:⁴⁰⁹ "Since prudence and earnestness are required in a pastor, it is desirable that his family should share these qualities. For how can a man rule the Church, if he cannot control his own house? Besides, not only must the Bishop himself be free from reproach – but his whole household must reflect a chaste and honourable discipline....

⁴⁰⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 358f.

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"The children should be believers, so that it may be obvious that they have been nurtured in the sound teaching of godliness and in the fear of the Lord... They must not be unruly. For he who cannot obtain any reverence or submission for his [own] children – could scarcely restrain his people by the bridle of his discipline!"

In his *Sermons upon the Epistle to Titus* (1:5f), Calvin preached:⁴¹⁰ "They that are appointed Ministers of the Word must not be intemperate.... His children must be faithful – not accused of riot, nor rebels.... In the [First] Epistle to Timothy (3:1f), we see that Saint Paul did not content himself with the Ministers' persons, but wanted to have their wives to be in good order. So much so that if a man for his own part live honestly and without reproach, yet if his wife be of a naughty conversation – this fault returns to him....

"For if he cannot govern his house (says St. Paul) – how shall he govern the house of God? How can he govern a whole people, both men and women, both great and small – when he cannot govern his wife? And therefore let us mark that in this place when he speaks of children, it is to the end we should mark whether a man be meet to govern the people of God and to rule His house and His church well – and have showed the effect of it in his own house!

"Therefore, if a man do not only show that he walks in the fear of God and abstains from all evil, but also causes them who are in his charge to serve and honour God – and does not permit his house to be either a stew, nor a dicing house, nor a tavern to get drunk in (nor suchlike); nor permits his servants, or his wife, or his children, to be lewd or dissolute the least jot that may be; nor use...any other vanity – when a man governs his household in this way, then we know that he is watchful and has a zeal for God....

"For this cause, St. Paul said precisely: 'Let their children be faithful; not accused of riot; nor rebels!' ... If we should choose [some]one to preach the Word of God who has not taught his [own] family – who has children whom if a man ask a reason of their faith...are not able to say a word – how will he be able to bring strangers to the faith, when he has not brought his own?"

* * * * *

Calvin went on: "He who is appointed to preach the Word and to govern and instruct the Church of God – must take good heed that his children be not stubborn; that they be not like wild beasts, hard and cumbersome to be ruled. For if he cannot do this with his [own] children – what will he do to them that do not

⁴¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 1070-75.

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belong to him at all? If he cannot subdue a little child in his pride and stubbornness – what will he do with the whole people? That is St. Paul's meaning....

"Beware (says he) you choose not such a one as cannot govern his house – to put him to a harder and more weighty office! And again, when he speaks of the choosing of Ministers, this goes further. For if a man be chosen to preach the Word of God, but he orders himself evilly – both himself and his house – it is no inheritance to him! He must be cut off! Such a stumbling-block must not be allowed!"

Calvin continued: "All Christians, though they be private men, must so walk in the state of marriage (if they be called unto it) that every one content himself with his yokefellow.... They whom God has so far honoured to give them children – let them consider that they are so much more bound to God to take pains that their children be brought up well.... If they will have them brought up well – they must always begin with religion. For children may in show have all the virtues in the World – but that is nothing, unless they fear God and honour Him....

"Let us learn by Saint Paul's example, to begin at this end – to instruct children! For if they once know God, it is a good foundation to build upon....

"Without it, there is nothing but ruin and confusion. For if we take pains to instruct our children in religion and in the true and pure knowledge of God and of His truth – their life will be answerable to it. That is to say, they will be honest....

"Because young men are 'cursed cattle to rule' – Saint Paul writes that they must be humble, and easy to be taught. For if there be no modesty in little children – a man shall take great pains to instruct them, but they will kick like unbroken colts.... It is to be lamented when we see rebellious children who cannot be tamed....

"Saint Paul says here...: let fathers beware they keep in their children, well and straitly! And if they will needs be men when they are yet under the rod – let them not spare them!

"It is true that parents may not grieve their children.... Yet they must fear lest their children, thus being hard to govern – take not liberty to give themselves to all wickedness....

"Also, let young folks know that unless they have this modesty in them, and this grace to suffer themselves quietly to be ruled by their superiors – we must say fie upon all their virtues – as indeed it is nothing...but pride and filthiness in them!"

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Calvin then ended his sermon. He declared: "Now let us fall down before the face of our good God, confessing our faults and praying Him that He would give us such a feeling of them – that from the greatest to the smallest of us, we may all be beaten down in ourselves and have no other" but the Lord!

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In Titus 2:1f, Paul enjoined: 'You must speak the things which become sound doctrine! The aged men must be sober! ... The aged women likewise! [They are to be]...teachers of good things – so that they may teach the young women to be sober; to love their husbands; to love their children; to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home!"

In his *Commentary on Titus* (2:3f), Calvin explained:⁴¹¹ "We very often see women advanced in years either continue to dress themselves with the lightness of youth, or have something superstitious.... He forbids them to be slanderers.... Talkativeness is a disease among women, and old age usually makes it worse.... Old women by their slanderous garrulity, as by a lighted torch, often set many homes on fire....

"To make them more attentive to their duties, he points out that it is not enough for their own lives to be decent – unless they also train the young women by their instruction in an honourable and modest way of life.... In reminding older women of their duties, he at the same time offers to the younger an example they should follow – and so teaches both at once. Briefly put, he wants women to be restrained from licentious love affairs by conjugal love and affection for their children – [and] to regulate their households soberly and with moderation."

In his *Sermons on Titus* (2:3f), Calvin preached:⁴¹² "Saint Paul...(as I said before)....speaks not only to the men.... Also the women have, by and by, their roll and instruction.... St. Paul commanded the elder women...to edify and to give good example to all the world.... Now St. Paul adds that they should be schoolmistresses of goodness – as if he should say that women are willing and desirous to be heard....

"Whereas women covet so to advance themselves – let them have a care when they come among young folk, to sing them a lesson of exhortation to well-doing! That, says St. Paul, is the true sovereignty wherewith women ought to content themselves....

⁴¹¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 369f.

⁴¹² *Op. cit.*, pp. 1151-63.

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"It is all one as if he should say...'If the Lord has given you the grace to know more than the younger sort, by reason of the time that you have lived – employ yourselves in showing the way of salvation to such as be not yet so well-trained as you be, and let them learn by your example!' And he says expressly, 'to the end that they may draw the younger sort to stayedness'....

"St. Paul will have young women to learn modesty.... Here we see what the wisdom of the faithful wives and their daughters is. It is...to govern their household quietly; to bring up their children (orderly); and to be subject to their husbands obediently....

"Now St. Paul still goes forward with the virtues that ought to be in women already stricken in years – that is, to wit, that they should love their husbands and their children; that they should tarry at home; and that they should be quiet with their husbands.... [Many] wives...run gadding from place to place, and leave their children and household alone....

"They should tarry at home with their husbands in good unity.... When they had children, they should have a care to bring them up and to keep them – and to teach them the fear of God, when they come to age....

"He adds that they should also tarry at home; that they should be gentle; and be subject to their husbands. Whereas he says that they should tarry at home – it appears to be a virtue that women ought to like well enough, without any exhorting of them thereunto....

"I do not know what a sort of vain bibble-babbles drive women out of their houses, and make them to cause a row here and there! ... Let a woman believe she has profited in the Gospel, when she can occupy herself quietly at home in her own house – and can keep herself at home diligently! ... When St. Paul says that women must tarry at home, his meaning is to hold them as it were fettered – so that they do not have the one foot ever ready to lift over the threshold at all hours, to seek news and to gad here and there....

"If husbands do not abide in good agreement with their wives, they dishonour Christ.... If such as vaunt Jesus Christ and are baptized in His Name do not behave themselves holy and uncorruptly and give good example – it turns to the slander of the Gospel!"

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This is stated also by another Apostle, in First Peter 2:1-2 & 3:1-7. There, it is urged: 'Laying aside all malice...and evil-speakings – as newborn babies, keep on desiring the sincere milk of the Word, so that you may keep on growing thereby!'

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In his comments on First Peter (2:1-2), Calvin elaborated⁴¹³ on this. For once "we have been born again," Calvin explained concerning the work of the Spirit of Christ, "He requires from us a life like that of infants.... 'Milk' is called that way of living which is suitable to innocent nature and simple infancy....

"In case anyone thinks that he [Peter] is commending an infancy that is void of understanding but full of fatuity – he meets this objection.... Paul reproved the Corinthians because they are like children and therefore...cannot take strong food but are to be fed with milk (First Corinthians 3:1). Almost the same words are found in Hebrews 5:12." Hence, their use also here in First Peter 2:1f is particularly significant.

"But in these passages," explained Calvin, "those who are compared to children remain always novices...in the doctrine of religion...and never penetrate into the higher knowledge of God.... But 'milk' here [in First Peter] is...a perpetual nourishment. For he wishes those nourished by it, to grow."

Of course, the spiritual growth of godly babies presupposes the prior spiritual health of their parents. Hence, Peter goes on to enjoin: 'you wives – keep on being in subjection to your own husbands! So that if any do not obey the Word – they too may be won by the behaviour of the wives without the Word....

"You husbands – keep on dwelling with them knowledgeably! Keep on giving honour to the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life – so that your prayers be not hindered!" First Peter 3:7.

Here, Calvin rightly commented:⁴¹⁴ "From husbands, he [Peter] requires prudence. For dominion over their wives is given them only on this condition.... Husbands ought to live with them knowledgeably – 'as with a weaker vessel'.... We learn to bear with one another....

"It is not unreasonable that Peter orders women to be cared for and to be honoured – with a gentle treatment. For they are weak. Further, just as we forgive children more easily when they offend through inexperience of age – so the weakness of the female sex ought to make us not too rigid and severe toward our wives....

"The Lord bestows the same grace alike on husbands and wives.... God cannot be called upon rightly – unless our minds be calm and peaceable. There is no place for prayer among strifes and contentions. Peter addresses both the husband

⁴¹³ J. Calvin: *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of Peter*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963, pp. 256f.

⁴¹⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 282f.

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and the wife – when he bids them be at peace with one another, so that they may pray to God with one mind....

"This reason ought to quieten all domestic quarrels and strifes [*cf.* the 'daily anger' at Ephesians 4:26b], in order that each one of the family may pray to God.... For we are more than insane – if we close up, knowingly and wilfully, the way to God's presence by prayer!"⁴¹⁵

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Last, Peter combines both the worshipping children and the worshipping parents. He sees them all together, as a worshipping family. For he enjoins baptized families to live their lives together, in godliness. Thus he reminds them that this is precisely what Noah's exemplary family did, especially before and when they were 'baptized' while all living together under the same family roof. Compare First Peter 3:20f with Genesis 6:8-18 & 7:1-12 & 8:6-22f & 9:1-16.

On First Peter 3:19, John Calvin commented:⁴¹⁶ "Peter ascribes salvation...to the family of Noah...within the ark.... In the common ruin of mankind, the family of Noah alone escaped.... Noah was surrounded on every side by the ungodly.... Noah obtained life through death, when...he was preserved together with his small family.... But we must notice that...we cannot otherwise derive benefit from baptism, except by having all our thoughts" – meaning the entirety of the thoughts of both believing parents and all of their children living in their homes – "fixed on the death and the resurrection of Christ."

Once again, to Calvin, the connection between Noah's daily family worship inside the ark and the similar necessity of our's today – is obvious. Would that it were obvious also to all modern Christians!

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We close Calvin's comments on Bible passages relevant to daily family worship, by referring to some of his comments on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Says the latter, 5:12, some untaught Christians 'have need of milk.'

On Hebrews 5:12, Calvin commented:⁴¹⁷ "The true purpose of teaching is to fit us together, so that we grow up to a perfect man.... We must, of course, show indulgence to those who have not yet tasted Christ.... But anyone who ought to grow with time, is inexcusable if he remains for ever a child....

⁴¹⁵ *Ib.*, p. 284.

⁴¹⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 292f.

⁴¹⁷ *Ib.*, p. 68.

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"The teaching of Christ provides milk for children, just as it provides solid food for adults.... An infant is nourished on the milk of its nurse – not that it may always depend on the breast, but so that it may be weaned gradually into stronger food.... We must suck milk from Scripture at first – so that we may later feed on its bread!"

'Therefore,' continues the Epistle to the Hebrews (6:1-2), 'let us cease to keep on speaking about "the first principles" of Christ – and press on to perfection!' Commented Calvin:⁴¹⁸ "The children of believers were baptized as infants – since they were adopted from the womb, and belonged to the body of the Church by right of the promise.

"Then, after their infancy was over and they had been instructed in the faith, they too offered themselves for a catechumenate.... The origin of this rite, came from the Apostles.... It was instituted by its first authors to be a solemn ceremony of prayer, as indeed Augustine declares. They intended by this sign, to 'confirm' the profession of faith which adolescents make when they pass from their childhood."

After the infantly-baptized covenant child has been raised by his parents with daily family worship, he is catechized by the Church at the end of childhood, and finally admitted to the Lord's Supper when an adolescent. Explained Calvin:⁴¹⁹ "The Supper is intended for those of riper years who, having passed the tender period of infancy, are fit to bear solid food....

"The Lord...does not admit all to partake of the Supper, but confines it to those who are fit to discern the body and blood of the Lord – to examine their own conscience.... 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup!' First Corinthians 11:28.... If they cannot partake worthily without being able duly to discern the sanctity of the Lord's body – why should we stretch out poison to our young children, instead of vivifying food?"

Continued Calvin:⁴²⁰ "It was anciently customary for the children of Christians, after they had grown up, to appear before the Bishop to fulfil that duty which was required [also] of such adults as presented themselves for baptism.... The infants...who had been initiated by baptism...were again, toward the end of their boyhood or on adolescence, brought forward by their parents – and were examined by the overseer in terms of the catechism which was then in common use....

⁴¹⁸ *Ib.*, p. 73.

⁴¹⁹ *Inst.*, IV:16:30.

⁴²⁰ *Ib.*, IV:19:4,13.

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"I wish we could retain the custom which...existed in the Early Church.... It would...be...catechizing, by which those in boyhood or immediately beyond it, would give an account of their faith.... Were this discipline in force at the present day – it would undoubtedly whet the sluggishness of certain parents who carelessly neglect the instruction of their children."

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We now consider Calvin's own family worship practices. He married a godly widow who already had children by her deceased husband.⁴²¹ Luther the extrovert loved to talk and to write about his own family life. Calvin the introvert was deliberately secretive. Consequently, as his biographer T.H.L. Parker noted: "Of Calvin's married life, we know next to nothing."⁴²²

However, we do know a few small things about the great Genevan Reformer's home life. Though often in ill health, Calvin and his wife Idelette were very happily married – until her death nine years later.⁴²³

Six weeks after their wedding, when they both became ill, Calvin wrote⁴²⁴ in October 1540 to his friend Farel: "Truly, lest our marriage be too happy – the Lord has from the first moderated our joy, so that it might not run beyond itself."

The lives of both Calvin and his wife were haunted by chronic ill health. Indeed, even the children born to the couple died in early infancy. Yet notwithstanding this, both before and after their births – there were always lodgers and relatives residing in Calvin's home, and no doubt participating together with him and his wife in their daily household worship services.

The plague hit their home in 1541, and wiped out three of their favourite boarders. Calvin sent his wife Idelette, his brother Antoine, and his sister Marie away from Strassbourg where they had then all been residing – so that they too could avoid becoming infected.

Yet his April 1541 *Letter to De Richebourg* – answering the latter's communication "which informed me [Calvin] that...my brother, wife and the others were safe" – clearly implies that the then lonely Calvin certainly missed his customary daily devotions together with his household. As he there

⁴²¹R. Stauffer: *The Humanness of John Calvin*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1971 ed., p. 39.

⁴²²T.H.L. Parker: *John Calvin – A Biography*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975, p. 102.

⁴²³R. Schippers: *John Calvin – His Life and Work*, Kampen: Kok, 1959, p. 165.

⁴²⁴J. Calvin: *Selected Works of John Calvin – Tracts and Letters*, ed. Bonnet (hereinafter called "Bonnet"), Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983, IV p. 204.

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explained:⁴²⁵ "I would have been all but utterly cast down unless – as I have already mentioned – my heart was refreshed in prayer and private meditations, which are suggested by His Word."

The next year, Calvin and Idelette lost their very own first-born baby. As Calvin wrote to his friend Viret in August 1542: "Certainly the Lord has afflicted us with a deep and painful wound in the death of our beloved son. But He is our Father! He knows what is best for His children!"⁴²⁶

Colladon, Calvin's colleague and biographer, wrote of Idelette Calvin that her husband John "lived happily with her – even though our Lord did not give them children" which survived. "I do not believe there can be found his like," wrote Colladon of Calvin. "He never ceased working, day and night, in the service of the Lord." Yet, as T.H.L. Parker remarked: "Calvin's home...was as much a centre of church activity as a haven from the World."⁴²⁷

It would seem Calvin's wife bore him apparently at least three children – all of whom died as babies, long before they could be catechized.⁴²⁸ Many years later, when the Romish jurist Baudouin cruelly suggested Calvin's childlessness was a divine curse, the Reformer replied:⁴²⁹ "I have myriads of sons – throughout the Christian World!" Indeed, both then and even today, many Christians in a multitude of lands – who avidly studied especially Calvin's *Catechism* and his *Institutes* – would acknowledge him as their own spiritual father.

Though Calvin left no surviving descendants, his household nevertheless consisted of nine permanent members – all of whom worshipped there. As his biographer T.B. van Halsema noted: "Calvin, Idelette, Idelette's daughter Judith, [his brother] Antoine, his wife Ann, their four small children – all of these lived in the Calvin house. Besides, there was the steady stream of visitors and messengers passing in and out of the door"⁴³⁰ of the home – in addition.

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⁴²⁵ *Ib.*, pp. 246f.

⁴²⁶ See Calvin's *Letter to Viret* of Aug. 1542, his *Letter to Farel* of May 1544; his *Letter to De Falais* of April 1546, and his *Letter to Viret* of Aug. 1547.

⁴²⁷ Stauffer: *op. cit.*, p. 39; Parker: *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁴²⁸ See in the 1983 Baker ed. of Bonnet's *op. cit.*, IV pp. 344 & 430 and V pp. 47 & 138. See too Stickelberger, E.: *John Calvin*, Cambridge: Clarke, 1977 ed., p. 71.

⁴²⁹ See Bonnet's *op. cit.*, IV p. 344 n. 3. See too Van Halsema, T.: *This Was John Calvin*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959, p. 121.

⁴³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 117.

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On her deathbed, Calvin promised his wife that he himself would raise her now-orphaned children as his very own.⁴³¹ Shortly thereafter, on April 7th 1549 he wrote⁴³² about the death of Idelette to his friend Viret: "I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life...."

"As long as she was alive – she was also the faithful helper for me in my ministry. From her I never experienced the slightest hindrance. She was never troublesome to me, throughout the entire course of her illness; she was more anxious about her children [by her previous marriage] than about herself...."

"I took occasion, on the third day before her death, to mention that I would not fail in discharging my duty to her children. Taking up the matter immediately, she said: 'I have already committed them to God!' When I said that this was not to prevent me from caring for them, she replied: 'I know you will not neglect what you know has been committed to God!'"

"Later also, when a certain woman insisted [to her] that she should talk with me regarding these matters, I for the first time heard her give the following brief answer: 'Assuredly, the principal thing is that they live a pious and holy life.... If they be pious, I am sure he [John Calvin] will gladly be a father to them!'"

Four days later, Calvin wrote about his wife's death to his friend Farel:⁴³³ "Intelligence of my wife's death has perhaps reached you.... I do what I can to keep myself from being overwhelmed with grief. My friends also leave nothing undone that may administer relief to my mental suffering...."

"When the brethren were assembled on Tuesday, they thought it best that we should join together in prayer.... Abel, in the name of the rest, exhorted her to faith and patience.... I," added Calvin, "afterwards added an exhortation...."

"She had made no allusion to her children. I, fearing that restrained by modesty she might be feeling an anxiety concerning them..., declared in the presence of the brethren that I should henceforth care for them as if they were my own. She replied: 'I have already committed them to the Lord!' When I replied that this was not to hinder me from doing my duty, she immediately answered: 'If the Lord shall care for them, I know they will be commended to you!'"

⁴³¹ Schippers: *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁴³² Bonnet's *op. cit.*, V pp. 216f. See too W.F. Dankbaar: *Calvin – His Way and His Work*, Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1957, pp. 67f.

⁴³³ Bonnet's *op. cit.*, V pp. 217f.

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"Her magnanimity was so great, that she seemed to have left the world already.... When she felt her voice suddenly failing her, she said: 'Let us pray!' ... I had now returned. She was unable to speak....

"I, having spoken a few words about the love of Christ, the hope of eternal life, concerning our married life, and her departure – engaged in prayer. In full possession of her mind, she both heard the prayer, and attended to it....

"I at present control my sorrow, so that my duties may not be interfered with.... Adieu, brother, and very excellent friend! May the Lord Jesus strengthen you by His Spirit! ... Salute all the brethren and your whole family!"

Calvin's anguish, however, continued even throughout the next quarter. For even three months after her death, Calvin wrote to his friend Bucer:⁴³⁴ "I survived my better half; for recently the Lord called my wife to Him."

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Let us now look at Calvin's practical measures in Geneva. His ecclesiastical Session of Elders in the local Consistory was also a judicial bench – which initially upheld, and later somewhat circumscribed, the paternal power.⁴³⁵

Calvin also produced a catechism for children, especially to help fathers give religious training to their families at home. He prefaced it with Peter's verses: "As new-born babes, you must keep on longing for the spiritual milk – being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you!"⁴³⁶

In 1541, and later again in 1545, Calvin published another *Catechism of the Church of Geneva*. It was subtitled: *A Form of Instruction for Children in the Doctrine of Christ*.

In his 'Dedication' of the 1545 *Catechism*, Calvin wrote:⁴³⁷ "It were to be wished...that one catechism were common to all the churches." However, all catechisms should – and (ideally at least) actually do – show "with what rudiments learned and unlearned alike amongst us were constantly imbued from childhood."

⁴³⁴ Stauffer: *op. cit.*, pp. 45f.

⁴³⁵ F. Bungener: *Calvin – His Life, His Work, and His Writings*, Amsterdam: Centen, 1863, p. 209.

⁴³⁶ Stickelberger: *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁴³⁷ J. Calvin: *Tracts and Treatises*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958, II pp. 33-37.

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In the next part of his 1545 *Catechism* – in the section headed 'To the Reader' – Calvin added: "It has ever been the practice of the Church...to see that children should duly be instructed in the Christian Religion. So that this might be done...schools [were] opened...and **individuals** enjoined to **teach** their **families**.... To secure this being done in order, there was written out a formula which was called a 'catechism.'"

In that *Catechism*, Calvin included a special section under the heading: 'Of Prayer.' There he insisted⁴³⁸ that "Our Lord Jesus Christ, being asked by His disciples in what way they ought to pray, answered – when you would pray, you must say (Matthew 6:9 & Luke 11:2), 'Our heavenly Father, may Your Name be hallowed! ... Give us this day our daily bread!'"

In Calvin's *Catechism*, the master then asks the scholar: "Are we then to ask God for anything from which no benefit redounds to us?" The scholar replies: "It is so."

The master then asks: "Shall we then dare to go to Him directly, without hesitation, as children to parents?" To which the scholar replies: "Wholly so. Nay, with much surer confidence of obtaining what we ask. For as our Master reminds us (Matthew 7:11), if we being evil cannot...refuse good things to our children; nor bear to send them away empty; nor give them poison for bread – how much greater kindness is to be expected from our heavenly Father Who is not only supremely good, but goodness itself!"

Thereupon the master asks: "Why do you call God 'our Father' in common – rather than 'my Father' in particular?" The scholar answers: "Each believer may indeed call Him his own Father; but the Lord used the common epithet ['our'] – so that He might accustom us to exercise charity in our prayers, and so that we might not neglect others, by each caring only for himself."

Subsequently, the master asks: "What do you mean by the 'daily' bread you ask for?" The scholar replies: "In general, everything that tends to the preservation of the present life – not only food or clothing, but also all other helps by which the wants of outward life are sustained."

The master then asks: "Why do you add both 'daily' and 'this day?'" The scholar replies: "By these two terms we are taught moderation and temperance, so that our wishes may not exceed the measure of necessity."

⁴³⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 74-78.

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The master then asks: "As this prayer ought to be common to all, how can the rich who have abundance at home and have provision laid up for a long period – ask it to be given them for a day?" The scholar then replies: "The rich, equally with the poor, should remember that none of the things which they have, will do them good – unless God grant them the use of them, and by His grace make the use fruitful and efficacious."

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In the section titled 'Of the Word of God' Calvin's *Catechism* had the master ask:⁴³⁹ "But are we not to use diligence and zealously strive to profit in it by reading, hearing and meditating?" The scholar replies: "Yes, verily! Seeing that everyone ought to exercise himself in the **daily** reading of it, and all should especially be careful to attend...when the doctrine of salvation is expounded."

The master then asks: "You affirm, then, that it is not enough for each to read privately...and that all ought to meet in common to hear the same doctrine?" The scholar then replies: "They must meet when they can – that is, when an opportunity is given."

Now it is obvious that such an opportunity should be given every morning and every evening – if not also at every noontime meal – whenever the Christian family is assembled together for daily household worship. This seems to be the reason why 'Several Godly Prayers' of Calvin are appended to his *Catechism*.

Thus – in his 'Prayer for the Morning' – Calvin there prayed:⁴⁴⁰ "My God, my Father and Preserver, Who of Your goodness has watched over me during the past night and brought me to this day – grant also that I may spend it wholly in the worship and service of Your most holy Deity! ...

"Seeing it is a small thing to have begun, unless I also persevere – I therefore entreat You, O Lord, not only to be my Guide and Director for this day – but to keep me under Your protection to the very end of life, so that thus my whole course may be performed under Your superintendence!

"As I ought to make progress – add daily more and more to the gifts of Your grace! ... Grant that I may hear Your voice in the morning, since I have trusted in You (Psalm 143:8)!"

⁴³⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 82f.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ib.*, pp. 95f.

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In his 'Prayer on Preparing to go to School'⁴⁴¹ Calvin reminded the Lord: "You promise that You will bestow wisdom on babes.... Let the only end at which I aim be so to qualify myself in early life – so that when I grow up, I may serve You in whatever station You may assign Me!"

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In his 'Blessing at Table' Calvin prayed:⁴⁴² "O Lord, in Whom is the source and inexhaustible fountain of all good things, pour out Your blessing upon us, and sanctify to our use the meat and drink which are the gifts of Your kindness towards us – so that we, using them soberly and frugally as You enjoin, may eat with a pure conscience! Grant also that we may always both with true heartfelt gratitude acknowledge, and with our lips proclaim You as our Father and the Giver of all good – and, while enjoying bodily nourishment, aspire with special longing of heart after the bread of Your doctrine by which our souls may be nourished in the hope of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord!"

In his 'Thanksgiving after Meat'⁴⁴³ Calvin first cited Psalm 117:1 – 'let all nations praise the Lord; let all the people sing praises to God!' Then he exclaimed: "We give thanks, O God and Father, for the many mercies which You of Your infinite goodness constantly bestow upon us.... By supplying all the helps which we need to sustain the present life – You show that You care even for our bodies."

Finally, in his 'Prayer at Night on Going to Sleep' John Calvin petitioned:⁴⁴⁴ "O Lord God, Who has given man the night for rest, as You have created the day in which he may employ himself in labour – grant, I pray, that my body may so rest, during this night! ... Since this day has not passed away without my having in many ways offended You through my proneness to evil – in like manner as all things are now covered by the darkness of the night, so let every thing that is sinful in me lie buried in Your mercy! Hear me, O God, Father and Preserver, through Jesus Christ Your Son! Amen."

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Calvin's 1541 *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* – alias his *Foundation of the Whole Organization and Discipline of the Church in Geneva*⁴⁴⁵ – is also very relevant.

⁴⁴¹ *Ib.*, p. 96.

⁴⁴² *Ib.*, p. 97.

⁴⁴³ *Ib.*, p. 98.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 98-99.

⁴⁴⁵ P.E. Hughes (ed.): *The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966, pp. 35-47.

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For there, it was stated "above all else that the doctrine of the holy Gospel of our Lord should be preserved carefully in its purity and the Christian Church properly maintained – so that the young should be instructed faithfully for the future."

At the baptism of infants, continued Calvin, "the names of the children together with the names of their parents are to be recorded.... Strangers are not to be accepted as godparents, but only Christian persons who are also members of our own communion – since others are not capable of promising the Church to instruct the children as they should."

Note here that it is not primarily the Church's Ministers, but instead primarily the parents themselves who are obligated to give regular religious instruction to their own children. For, at the baptisms of their infants, they – the parents themselves – are the ones "promising the Church to instruct the children as they should." After the infant baptism, those parents were then to train those children – at daily family worship and otherwise – all the years their children were under their roof.

Throughout that time, even in Calvin's Presbytery of Geneva, however – "on Sundays...at noon the catechism (that is to say instruction of little children) shall be conducted in all three churches.... In sending children to catechism...the boundaries of the parishes should as far as possible be observed....

"The Supper was instituted by our Lord.... We have decided and ordered that it should be administered four times a year.... On the Sunday before its celebration, an announcement shall be made that no child is to come to it before having made profession of faith in accordance with what is taught in the catechism."

Indeed, only "when a child has been instructed sufficiently to pass on from the catechism – he shall recite, solemnly, the sum of what is contained in it...in the presence of the church. Before this has been done, no child is to be admitted as a communicant to the Supper....

"Parents are to be cautioned not to bring them before the time. For it is very perilous both for the children and for their fathers to present them – without good and sufficient instruction....

"These who contravene this order, shall be called before the company of Elders or Delegates.... For the purpose of observing who are performing their duty and who not – the above-mentioned Delegates shall keep a watchful eye."

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What Calvin in this regard wrote in October 1548 to the Calvinistic Lord Protector Somerset – Regent of England under the minority of the Calvinistic young king Edward VI who had then only just turned eleven – is highly significant. There, the great Swiss Reformer urged Somerset in respect of Edward:⁴⁴⁶

"God...has placed him upon a royal throne [right after his father's death in 1547], and has committed to you the protection as well of his person as of his majesty.... We may never doubt that God reckons us among the number of His children, and that we may confidently call upon Him as our Father.... God has given you grace to re-establish the knowledge of this doctrine which had been so long buried out of sight by Antichrist....

"What I have thus suggested as to the manner of instruction, is only that the people be so taught as to be touched to the quick.... There ought to be an explicit summary of the doctrine.... They have a common *formula* of instruction for little children and for ignorant persons, serving to make them familiar with sound doctrine....

"The Church of God will never preserve itself without a catechism. For it is like the seed to keep the good grain from dying out, and causing it to multiply from age to age....

"Therefore, if you desire to build an edifice which shall be of long duration and which shall not soon fall into decay – make provision for the children being instructed in a good catechism which may show them briefly and in language level to their tender age, wherein true Christianity consists!

"This catechism will serve two purposes – to wit, as an introduction to the whole people, so that every one may profit from what shall be preached; and also to enable them to discern when any presumptuous person puts forward strange doctrine.... The catechism ought to serve as a check upon such people....

"As you are well-versed in the Holy Scriptures, you perceive from what fountain I have drawn all that is contained herein.... I do not fear to have been troublesome or importunate to you, in making manifest...the hearty desire I have that the Name of God may always be more and more glorified by you....

⁴⁴⁶Bonnet's *op. cit.*, V pp. 187-98.

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This is my daily supplication – beseeching Him that He would please to increase His grace in you...that so the king may have whereof to praise this gracious God for having had such a governor in his childhood, both for his person and for his kingdom."

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In a letter dated January 1551, Calvin then urged King Edward himself⁴⁴⁷ "to take courage in following out what you have so well and happily begun as well in your own person as in the state of your kingdom – namely the consecration of all to God and to our blessed Saviour Who has so dearly purchased us.... Let me entreat you then, Sire, to reach forward!"

When scarcely fourteen years old, King Edward VI set forth his plan for the Reformation of England. He not only carefully drew up a journal of events occurring during his reign, but he also composed a collection of passages in the Old Testament condemning idolatry and image-worship – and dedicated it to his uncle, the Regent Lord Somerset.⁴⁴⁸

Some months later, in July 1552, Calvin again urged⁴⁴⁹ the young King of England: "It is indeed a great things to be a king – and, yet more, over such a country. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that you reckon it beyond comparison better – to be a Christian! It is therefore an invaluable privilege that God has vouchsafed you, Sire, to be a Christian king – to serve as His lieutenant in ordering and maintaining the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in England.

"You see, then, that in acknowledgement of such great benefits received from His infinite goodness, you ought to be stirred up to employ all your energies to His honour and service, setting to your subjects an example of homage to this great King to Whom your majesty is not ashamed to submit yourself with all humility and reverence beneath the spiritual sceptre of His Gospel."

We give more material by Calvin on King Edward VI, Queen Jane (Lady Grey), "Bloody Mary" and Queen Elizabeth I of England – later. See our Chapter VIII below, on "Daily Family Worship from A Lasco to the Puritans."

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Thus, even young King Edward VI of England – though himself an infantly-baptized child of the covenant – still needed subsequent daily family devotions at

⁴⁴⁷ *Ib.*, pp. 300f.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ib.*, p. 261 n. 1.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 354f.

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home. Deuteronomy 6:6f. Later, he also needs personal daily devotions in private. Psalm 119:9f.

Such covenant children also need weekly worship in church (compare Joel 2:16f). Later, in addition, they further require weekly instruction first in Sunday School (compare John 21:15f) – and, subsequently, final instruction also in the Catechism Class (compare First Timothy 6:12).

Indeed, all of this is necessary in building a really satisfactory bridge across the huge chasm of challenges – upon the rough road of 'growing up' (on the way between infancy and maturity). For approximately thirteen years, that road leads uphill – from baptism in infancy, to the eucharist at adolescence. However: 'train and catechize a lad in the way he should go; then, when his beard begins to grow, he will not depart from that way!' See Proverbs 22:6 in the original Hebrew (compare at our note 159f above).

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Of particular importance to the subject of daily family worship, is Calvin's 1537 document *On Shunning the Unlawful Rites of the Ungodly and Preserving the Purity of the Christian Religion*. It is subtitled *A Letter by John Calvin to his dear and very excellent friend N.S.* – whom Calvin's biographer Beza says was Nicholas Chemin of Orleans.

N.S. was a secretly-Protestant Christian. However, he – together with his openly-Romish fiancée and their servants – had continued to worship in the Papal Church. So Calvin now wrote to him:⁴⁵⁰

"My dear brother! I feel extremely sorry on your account and, as in duty bound, pity your situation – in not being able to come forth out of that Egypt in which so many idols and so much monstrous idolatry are daily presented to your eyes.... The thing required rather is, that each consider for himself what befits his own vocation and order....

"On those whom the Lord destines for the Ministry of His Word, He bestows a kind of public character – that their voice may be heard in the light, and rise trumpet-tongued above the house-tops. Others, abstaining from the public office of Apostles, must prove themselves Christians by performing the duties of private life.... It is sufficiently clear that though all Christians are not equally obliged to perform the public office of professing Religion – there is, however, a kind of private confession which all without exception are bound to make....

⁴⁵⁰*Tracts & Treat.*, III pp. 359f & 367 & 376 & 407-9.

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"You must be particularly careful in regulating your household, over which you should consider that you have been set not merely so that each may yield you obedience and service by being brought up religiously in the fear of the Lord and imbued with the best discipline.... It is truly said by Aristotle that 'Every man's house is the image of a little kingdom in which the head of the family as chief makes laws by which he may train those under him to all justice and innocence'....

"Not even in human judgment is he excusable who, careless as to the regulation of his family..., allows it to be flagitious in regard to God and man. You ought even to rise higher in your thoughts, and consider that those persons of whom the Lord has made you master are committed to your trust – He having placed them under you, so that you may teach and accustom them first of all to obey and serve Him."

The Apostle Paul says: 'If any[one] does not provide for his own, and specially for those of his own house[hold] – he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' First Timothy 5:8.

"On this, John Calvin rightly remarked: "Not therefore without cause did the Apostle...when speaking of those who cast off all anxiety as to the administration of their household – inflict on them the heavy censure that they have 'denied the faith and are worse than infidels.' For what else is it, than to refuse and to desert the post assigned by God, and to renounce His vocation?" Thus John Calvin to N.S.

Calvin then continued: "Will the Scripture never bestow praise on a Christian man, without adding that he and his whole house believed (John 4:53)? And shall we boast of faith in Christ, while fostering the denial of Him within the walls of our house? ... If the first requisite in a good householder is to manage his household rightly and in order – and the household of a Christian man can only then be considered duly arranged, when it exhibits the appearance of a little Bethel – it must be your careful endeavour not to leave yours ignorant or devoid of piety!"

Calvin next became even more pointed, in his letter to the 'Secret- Protestant' N.S. "Grant[ed]," he said, "that the members of your household are of such disposition and natural temper as promise no good – still, having obtained them, dare to imbue them with the doctrine of God and to sow within them the seed of His Word! God Himself will provide the rest, and give a success which will never allow you to repent of having obeyed His commands....

"The Lord has many ways of avenging contempt of His Word. In contracting marriage..., consider in what fetters you entangle yourself if you take a wife

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differing from you in religion.... I wish you may rather fear and beware, than be willing to make the trial!

"I know the flattering thought: 'she now opposes in such a manner that I am confident she will gradually give in.' Do not vainly promise this of yourself! ... A good wife is His special gift. Proverbs 19:14.... How can you expect a good wife from Him Whom you will not hear, while strictly prohibiting you from being 'yoked with unbelievers?' II Corinthians 6:14."

Clearly, then, Protestant Christians should enter into marriage only with Protestant Christians. Thereafter, they are to raise their children in that same faith. Indeed, even when a man is already married to a Romanist before his own conversion to Protestantism – he should endeavour to win his spouse and their children to Protestantism, especially through daily family worship. Compare First Corinthians 7:10-16 and First Timothy 5:8.

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Significant too is Calvin's April 1541 *Letter to De Richebourg*. The latter had just lost his one son Louis and the latter's tutor Claude – to the plague. However, Richebourg's other son Charles – as well as others in his household (such as Malherbe) – were still alive.

From this letter of Calvin, it can be seen how much he loved Monsieur de Richebourg's two sons Charles and Louis. Both of them had spent some time, previously, separated from their own father – apparently while students – and had then been together in Calvin's home for quite a while.

Indeed, Louis and his tutor Claude had just been in Calvin's home yet again – and had even died under his roof. For Calvin loved Charles and Louis – and also their tutor Claude – almost as much as if they had all been his very own children.

Calvin began his letter sadly. He wrote:⁴⁵¹ "When I first received the intelligence of the death of Claude and of your son Louis – I was so utterly overpowered that for many days I was fit for nothing but to grieve....

"I saw the young man, your son, taken away in the very flower of his age – a youth of most excellent promise whom I loved as a son.... On his part, he showed such respectful affection toward me [Calvin] as he would to another father" (namely Richebourg himself).

⁴⁵¹ Bonnet's *op. cit.*, IV pp. 246-53.

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"To this grievous sorrow, was still added the heavy and distressing anxiety we experienced about those whom the Lord had spared to us. I heard that [the various members of] the whole household were scattered here and there. The danger of Malherbe caused me very great misery...and warned me also as to the rest.... Your Charles, I assure you, was continually recurring to my thoughts....

"There is most assuredly one sure and certain...source of consolation in which you, and men like you, ought to acquiesce – because it flows from that inward feeling of piety which I know to abound in you. Therefore – take special care to call to mind those thoughts which are taught us by the most excellent Master of all [the Lord Jesus], and suggested to our understanding in the school of piety!"

Calvin then continued to assure Richebourg: "Because of your singular piety...you will not perhaps be unwilling to recognize in my letter thoughts which have spontaneously occurred to your own mind at some other time. The son whom the Lord had lent you for a season, He has taken away.... It is God, therefore, Who has sought back from you your son – whom He had committed to you to be educated, on the condition that he might always be His Own....

"Louis should be put among the children [of God] – as a son of His adoption. He bestowed this benefit upon you out of the multitude of His mercies, so that you might reap the excellent fruit of your careful education before his death. Thence also you might know your interest in the blessing that belonged to you: 'I will be Your God, and the God of your seed!'

"From his earliest boyhood, so far as his years allowed, he was grounded in the best studies – and had already made such a competent proficiency and progress, that we entertained great hope of him for the future.... That, however, which we rate most highly in him – was that he had drunk so largely into the principles of piety.... He had not merely a correct and true understanding of religion, but had also been imbued faithfully with the unfeigned fear and reverence of God....

"With reference to my own feelings, if your sons had never come hither at all, I should never have been grieved on account of the death of Claude and Louis.... Whatever, therefore, may have been the kind or model of education they were in search of – I rejoice that they lived under the same roof with me....

"I rejoice also that they died under my roof, where they rendered back their souls to God most composedly.... It was in the midst of pious exhortations, and while calling upon the Name of the Lord, that these sainted spirits fled from the communion of their brethren here – to the bosom of Christ. Nor would I desire now to be free from all sorrow at the cost of never having known them. Their memory will ever be sacred to me to the end of my days, and I am persuaded that it will also be sweet and comforting....

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"In regard to Louis, it is yet more certain.... For he had arrived at that age when, by true evidences, he could prove himself a member of the body of Christ. Having put forth this fruit, he was taken from us and transplanted" – into Heaven.

"Nor can you consider yourself to have lost him.... For they [Claude and Louis] had both so lived and so died, that I cannot doubt but they are now with the Lord. Let us, therefore, press forward toward this goal which they have reached!"

Calvin then concluded: "Charles survives to you, of whom we all entertain this sentiment – that there is not one of us who does not desire that he might have such a son.... I would say, among strangers, that the young man excels in the first place in singular piety and in the true fear of God which is the beginning and the end of all wisdom.... May Christ the Lord keep you and your family, and direct you all with his own Spirit – until you may arrive where Louis and Claude have gone before!"

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John Calvin frequently encouraged his many friends to worship God also in their homes. Below we refer to personal letters which evidence this.

To the Duchess Rene of Ferrara, Calvin wrote⁴⁵² in 1541: "Madame, by other worthy persons who have passed through here at different times – I have been given to understand how Master Francois, whom you have appointed Preacher to your household, after having acquitted himself [rather] well in preaching...had persuaded you.... May the Lord [Jesus Christ then] have a care over you...and...manifest in you the efficacy of His Spirit in such a way that you may be as much honoured in His household as He has elevated you in station and dignity among men!"

To his colleague Viret, Calvin wrote⁴⁵³ in 1542: "Adieu, my dear brother! May the Lord preserve you, and bring you speedily hither in safely! Salute all the brethren and your family, in my own name and in that of my wife!"

To De Falais, Calvin wrote⁴⁵⁴ in 1547: "I return thanks to our Lord, and all our friends along with me, for the happy delivery which He has granted to Madame." Calvin then prayed that God "would so bless the offspring which He has given you, that you may have...comfort in them in the time to come."

⁴⁵² *Ib.*, pp. 296-306.

⁴⁵³ *Ib.*, p. 351.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ib.*, p. 132.

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To the Bude' family, John Calvin wrote⁴⁵⁵ in that same year 1547: "Messieurs and well-beloved brethren! Although the present is addressed particularly to two of you, I nevertheless write in such wise that if you think fit it may serve for the whole household.... Our kind heavenly Father assists His children, and most of all out of their greatest difficulties."

To a Seigneur of Piedmont, Calvin wrote⁴⁵⁶ in 1554: "You have to think of your children, whom God has confided to your charge for this end – that they should be dedicated to Him, and that He should be the supreme Father of them as of you.... Both father and children should be devoted to God entirely.... It is highly necessary that you should train them up for the possession of a heavenly inheritance!"

To Madame Agnes de Microw, John Calvin wrote⁴⁵⁷ in 1554: "In not hesitating to send your children far from you and into an almost unknown country so that they might better imbibe the pure doctrine of Christ, you have clearly shown how precious a virtuous and a pious education is – in your eyes.... Tender affection...is naturally implanted in the heart of mothers, till you see your sons imbued with the uncorrupted faith of Christ....

"The pious discipline which flourishes in your house, is no less worthy of praise.... Would that all had at heart to make it a rule for their families, to cherish as it were a domestic church in their houses! It were also to be desired...that there were found not only more ladies but [also] men who should spread the light of a similar example.... God has proposed in you an example which should deservedly draw on even men to imitate it."

To Viret, Calvin again wrote⁴⁵⁸ in 1557: "Farewell, best and most upright brother! Salute in my name the brethren, your wife, and daughters! May God protect, govern, and bless you all!"

To the great French Protestant Admiral Gaspard de Coligny, John Calvin wrote⁴⁵⁹ in 1558: "Monseigneur! Set about, in good earnest, the principal study – which is that of doing homage to God! ... I entreat you...to savour better than ever [and] to feel the real worth of His doctrine. How precious and desirable it ought to seem to us, and [for you] to devote your leisure to the reading of His Holy Word so that you may derive instruction therefrom and become more deeply rooted in faith!"

⁴⁵⁵ *Ib.*, 154.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ib.*, VI pp. 23f.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ib.*, VI pp. 112f.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 308f.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 466f.

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To Madame de Grammont, Calvin wrote⁴⁶⁰ in 1559: "Exhort yourself then to patience, by the Word of God; and strive to overcome all temptations by which I have no doubt you are greatly agitated! In the mean time, pray God continually to convert the heart of your husband – and on your own part make every effort to win him over and fix him in the right path!"

To Comtess de Roye, De Coligny's sister, Calvin wrote⁴⁶¹ in 1561: "You have also another blessing...in seeing your daughters, the princess as well as her sister, keeping you company in tending towards the chief end of our existence: giving themselves up with one accord, and dedicating their lives to the obedience of the pure truth.... Though I have heard with what zeal you desire to serve God – nevertheless I pray you to take more and more courage, striving to overcome all the obstacles that might retard you!"

Finally, to the Duchess of Ferrara, Calvin wrote again⁴⁶² in 1563, not long before his own death: "It is your duty, Madame, to preserve for the future your house pure and uncontaminated – so that it may be dedicated wholly to Him.... I will supplicate our heavenly Father to keep you always under His protection – to strengthen you with invincible courage, and increase you in all good and prosperity!"

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Summarizing, we have seen that Calvin believed Old Testament daily family worship did not dispensationalistically terminate at Calvary. He rightly saw that the petition "Give us this day our daily bread!" – which Jesus in the Lord's Prayer commanded His disciples regularly to pray, and even "for ever and ever" – clearly implies household devotions especially at mealtimes. Thus, John Calvin believed such family worship at meals every day carried on also into the Post-Pentecost New Testament period – and is indeed also a requirement for the Church of all ages.

It is in this light that Calvin looked at the expression "breaking bread at home" in Acts 2:46. He thus suggested it implies family worship every day at mealtimes – rather than ecclesiastical eucharist services daily or even successively several times each day in a plurality of places.

Similarly, at Acts 10:2f, Calvin commented: "Let each of us take the example of Cornelius, and encourage himself to persevere in prayer...with all his house!"

⁴⁶⁰ *Ib.*, VII p. 71.

⁴⁶¹ *Ib.*, pp. 227f.

⁴⁶² *Ib.*, pp. 315f.

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Even at Acts 17:11, Calvin saw evidence of brethren who "strengthened their faith daily" also amid "domestic struggles."

At First Corinthians 7:5 & 7:14 & 11:22 & 14:35, Calvin commented that "prayer...ought to be made not only daily, but also continually.... The husband is the head of the wife, and she is her husband's companion in every way.... Each person has a home of his own.... Let the women..., if they want to learn anything, ask their own menfolk at home."

In his comments on Ephesians 5:14 to 6:18, Calvin commented that "we must continue our prayers...at all seasons." In his *Sermons on Ephesians* (5:22f & 6:1f), Calvin preached that "the husband...must needs...guide his wife and his household." So too in Calvin's comments on Colossians 3:16f, and in his *Institutes* at III:20:22.

Calvin elaborated on daily family worship considerably, in his comments and his sermons on Paul's Epistles to Timothy. Of particular relevance here are the Reformer's statements on First Timothy 2:8f & 3:1f & 4:1f & 5:9f – and on Second Timothy 1:3f & 3:14f.

Thus Calvin there declared: "We not only ask for our **daily** bread according to Christ's commandments, but we also offer thanksgiving for His goodness." He also declared: "If anyone takes 'daily and nightly prayers' to mean prayers Paul was in the habit of offering at stated hours, there is nothing absurd in that view."

In his comments and sermons on Titus (1:6f & 2:1f), and in his comments on First Peter 2:1f & 3:1-7, Calvin did likewise. So too in his comments on Hebrews 5:12 & 6:1f – and in his remarks in his *Institutes* IV:16:30 & IV:19:4-13 anent household training toward admission to the Lord's Supper at adolescence.

Next, looking at Calvin's own household worship practices, it appeared from his numerous letters that he regularly worshipped God in his home – together with his wife, and their various lodgers. On her deathbed, he also promised his wife to keep on nourishing her surviving children by a previous marriage.

In his *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* and in his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, Calvin provided "that the young be instructed faithfully for the future." At the baptism of infants, he insisted, "the names of the children together with the names of their parents are to be recorded." Parents are to be "capable of promising the Church to instruct the children as they should."

Consistently, Calvin thus urged also Regent Somerset to catechize the young King of England Edward VI. Calvin even urged Edward, and many other

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monarchs throughout Europe, to do all they could to encourage godliness also in their own homes.

Calvin told his friend N.S.: "Every man's house is the image of a little kingdom in which the head of the family as chief makes laws by which he may train those under him.... You ought even to...consider that those persons of whom the Lord has made you master, are committed to your trust – He having placed them under you, so that you may teach and accustom them first of all to obey and serve Him....

"Shall we boast of faith in Christ, while fostering the denial of Him within the walls of our house? ... The first requisite in a good householder, is to manage his household rightly.... The household of a Christian man can only then be considered duly arranged...when it exhibits the appearance of a little Bethel" alias a 'house of God.'

Finally, Calvin's voluminous correspondence clearly reveals the premium he placed on regular family worship. He told Richebourg that he had treated his two sons as if his own, when they were under the roof of the Reformer. He urged the Duchess of Ferrara to see to it that God was honoured in her household. He repeatedly conveyed his greetings not just to his friend Viret but also to the latter's wife and children.

He conveyed his best wishes to the "whole household of Bude' and De Falais. He charged a Seigneur of Piedmont to devote his children entirely to God, and to train them up accordingly. He congratulated Madame de Microw on giving "a virtuous and a pious education" to her children – and for "the pious discipline which flourishes in your house" as a very good example of a "domestic church."

Calvin exhorted Madame de Grammont to pray continually for the conversion of her husband. He encouraged Admiral de Coligny to pursue his worship of God at home, and urged the latter's sister (the Comtess de Roye) to encourage her daughters to dedicate their lives to the obedience of the truth.

Finally, he also urged the Duchess of Ferrara for the Lord's sake to preserve her "house pure and uncontaminated – so that it may be dedicated wholly to Him." To that end, Calvin himself vowed: "I will supplicate our heavenly Father to keep you always under His protection...and increase you in all good and prosperity."

Accordingly, there can be no doubt about Calvin's own commitment to the practice of daily family worship. Very clearly, he considered it to be the will of God – for all people; of all nations; and in all times.

VIII

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In a previous chapter, we have seen that Calvin's sabbath views imply even daily household worship. This insight was developed even further by the great Polish Reformer John a Lasco (alias Jan Laski), with whom Calvin corresponded in the early fifteen-fifties.

In his *Catechism*, Laski advocated the 'internal sabbath' – stating that the believer should daily die to sin; daily praise and thank God; and always contemplate the saint's everlasting rest. However, in addition, Laski argued that the Fourth Commandment requires not only weekly worship on the sabbath. It also even enjoins a believer to "work zealously for six days a week in a God-honouring occupation"; to "maintain his family"; and to "encourage his entire household" to "worship God" *etc.*⁴⁶³

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These genial "Calvinian" insights of Laski found their way into the 1563 *Heidelberg Catechism*. This sought to promote unity between Calvinists and Lutherans. To Question 103 ('What does God require in the Fourth Commandment?'), that *Catechism* gave a twofold answer:⁴⁶⁴

First, that...I diligently...especially on the Sabbath, that is on the day of rest (Isaiah 66:23 *etc.*)..., hear the Word of God...; call publicly upon the Lord; and...give Christian service.... Second, that I: celebrate, all the days of my life; cease from my evil works; and allow the Lord to work in me through His Spirit – and thus begin, in this life, the everlasting Sabbath."

Even this *Heidelberg Catechism* was, at a very early stage, much used also in family worship. It is well-known that the famous Protestant artist and poet Anna Maria Schuurman, who was born in Germany of Belgian Calvinist refugee parents in 1607, had already absorbed Question 1 of that *Catechism* by the time she was four.

That first question asks: "What is your only comfort, in life and in death?" It answers: "That I belong – body and soul, in life and in death – not to myself, but

⁴⁶³ Cf. A. Kuyper's *Op. Coll. Joh. a Lasco*, II pp. 373-76; W. Geesink's *Concerning the Lord's Ordinances*, Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1908, III pp. 535-36.

⁴⁶⁴ *Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy of the Reformed Dutch Church*, Cape Town: Rose, 1876.

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to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.... By His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life – and makes me whole heartedly willing and ready, from now on, to live for Him!"

Anna Maria never forgot the impression made in her little heart by those words. Having encountered them for the first time when still tiny – and apparently at family worship in her parents' home – she thereafter sought to continue serving the Lord for the rest of her life.⁴⁶⁵

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At this point, we think it best to look at first to the early French Huguenots. Second, we shall glance at the Post-Calvinian developments in Switzerland. Third, we shall refer to the subsequent developments in Holland until the famous 1618-19 international Synod of Dordt. Fourth, shall we go back to Calvin's Scottish student John Knox. Then, we will trace the subsequent development of Calvinism even in Scotland and England.

It will be recalled that Calvin was a Frenchman, before he became a Swiss citizen in 1559. His French followers were called 'Huguenots.' Many believe that this term, now obscure, originally meant: covenant-keepers. Compare the German *Eid-genossen*.

Perhaps the leading Huguenot was the French Admiral Gaspard de Coligny (1519-72). Converted from Romanism to Calvinism sometime between 1555 and 1560, Coligny received encouraging letters from John Calvin himself in September 1558 and in May 1561.

After becoming a Calvinist, the nobleman Coligny soon instituted daily family worship in his castle. The Scriptures were read, and the psalms sung. As soon as the Admiral rose, which was very early in the morning, he, putting on his dressing-gown and kneeling with all the rest who were present, would offer prayer.

A number not only of Frenchmen but also of German captains and colonels, whom he often asked to dine with him, can bear witness. Coligny never for a single day failed to observe this custom – not only at home and in times of leisure, but also in the army. Standing with his wife and all present, he returned thanks himself.

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. Dr. Th. Ruys's art. *Schuurman (Anna Maria van)*, in *Chr. Enc.*, Kampen: Kok, 1929, V p. 134; cf. H.H. Barger: *Our Church Book*, Rotterdam: Bredee, 1907, p. 177. As an earnest Christian, she later followed the Labadists – to the regret of Voetius.

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The same was done at supper. He gave orders that all should gather together as soon as supper was over – and that after the singing of the psalm, prayer should be offered.

Many of the French nobility began to establish this religious rule in their own families, following the example of the Admiral. He exhorted them often to the true practice of piety. He said it was not enough for the father of a family to live holily and religiously – if he did not by his example train up his household by the same rule. The Admiral's piety and holiness were so much admired, even by many Roman Catholics, that but for the fear and horror of tortures and massacres – the greater part of France would have been converted to the Reformed religion and discipline. Thus the Australian Presbyterian Rev. Dr. William Gray Dixon – in his 1930 book *The Romance of the Catholic Presbyterian Church*.⁴⁶⁶

* * * * *

Very soon after the death of Calvin in 1564, the Swiss Reformed Church produced the *Second Helvetic Confession*. This teaches⁴⁶⁷ that "baptism, once received, continues for all of life – and is a perpetual sealing of our adoption.... To be baptized in the name of Christ is to be enrolled, entered and received into the covenant and family – and so into the inheritance – of the sons of God....

"God also separates us from all strange religions and peoples by the symbol of baptism, and consecrates us to Himself as His property.... Hence, we are enlisted in the holy military service of Christ, so that all our life long we should fight against the world, Satan, and our own flesh....

"We condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that new-born infants of the faithful are to be baptized. For, according to evangelical teaching, of such is the Kingdom of God – and they are in the covenant of God."

Furthermore: "A man is permitted to pray privately in any language that he understands" – and "unceasing prayer is to be made both privately and publicly." Indeed, "children are to be brought up by the parents in the fear of the Lord."

Moreover, "those works which are done by parents in true faith by way of domestic duties and the management of their households, are in God's sight holy and truly good works. They are not less pleasing to God than prayers.... For thus the Apostle has taught in his epistles, especially in those to Timothy and Titus."

⁴⁶⁶Melbourne: Presbyterian Church in Australia Board of Christian Education, 1930, pp. 91-93.

⁴⁶⁷Chs. 20,23,29.

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Thus: First Timothy 2:15 to 3:12; 4:3-5; 5:5-14; Second Timothy 1:3-5; 3:14f; and Titus 1:5-7 & 2:3-5.

The influence of Calvin and A Lasco continued among Calvinist refugees in London and especially in Frankfort. This was seen in particular, when the famous Calvinist Peter Dathenus compiled his *Frankendale Liturgy*.

That contained⁴⁶⁸ many of the 'Formulas' later approved in 1618-19 by the Synod of Dordt for the Dutch Reformed Churches and other Calvinists elsewhere. We mean documentary formulas such as: the *Baptismal Formula*; the *Marriage Formula*; the *Morning Prayer* and the *Evening Prayer*; and the *Prayer Before and After Meals* (for use in family worship); *etc.*

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The *Baptismal Formula* was first approved at the 1581 Synod of Middelburg. Drawn up by Dathenus from the writings of the Calvinists John A Lasco and Martin Micron(ius), and edited by the famous theologian Caspar van der Heyden, it soon became the standard form used (both then and now) throughout the Germanic-Reformed world.⁴⁶⁹

The first part states,⁴⁷⁰ of Christian parents, that "we with our children...cannot enter into the Kingdom of God except we are born again"; that "we by God through baptism are again admonished of and obliged to a new obedience"; and that "although our young children do not understand these things, we may not on that account exclude them from baptism. For, as they are without their knowledge partakers of condemnation in Adam – so are they again received unto grace in Christ. Genesis 17:7 & Acts 2:39 & Mark 10:16."

The second part of the *Baptismal Formula* is a prayer to be rendered right before the administration of baptism especially to the infants of those who profess to be Christians. It is derived, *via* Micron, from Zwingli (and more remotely from Luther).

There, the baptism of such children is compared to the preservation of Noah's family in the ark (*cf.* First Peter 3:18-21) – and also to that of the whole Israelitic nation at the Red Sea (*cf.* First Corinthians 10:1-4). In this prayer, God is now implored: "Graciously look upon these children of **Yours!**" *Cf.* Ezekiel 16:20-21)!

⁴⁶⁸ Barger: *op. cit.*, p. 190.

⁴⁶⁹ *Id.* & *ib.*, p. 206 & n., & pp. 209 & 213.

⁴⁷⁰ See *Doctrinal Standards* (n. 464 above), pp. 126f.

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This is not a petition for God to incorporate those who are said already to be **His** children ("these children of Yours") into the **in**-visible Kingdom of God. Because it is presumed, rebuttably, that these children are **already** in His Kingdom – the above is a petition that He now further incorporate them, through baptism, into membership of His Visible Church.

In the third part of the *Formula* – which Dathenus derived from A Lasco⁴⁷¹ – the parents are asked: "Do you acknowledge that, although our children are conceived and born in sin..., yet they have been sanctified in Christ [*cf.* First Corinthians 7:14]; and therefore, as members of His Church, ought to be baptized?"

Micron saw this as teaching that the believers' infants themselves are already to be presumed to be justified believers. This presumption is **rebut-table**. However, **unless** and **until** later actually rebut-**ted** – after the infant might (most regrettably) yet grow up to manifest himself or herself as an openly flagrant unbeliever – the presumption is to be **maintained!**

The parents are next asked: "Do you acknowledge that the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament and comprehended in the *Articles of the Christian Religion* [alias the *Apostles' Creed*]...is the true and complete doctrine of salvation?"

Indeed, the parents are then also asked: "Do you promise, and is it your intention – as soon as this child of which you are the father and the mother can understand – to instruct him or her in this doctrine?"

Finally, the last part of the *Baptismal Formula* was derived by Dathenus from A Lasco *via* the German Reformed Palatinate – where Calvin's student Olevianus, the co-author of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, had laboured. There, in the prayer of thanksgiving after baptism has been administered, we read:

⁴⁷¹Barger: *op. cit.*, pp. 220f.

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"We thank and praise You that [**before** baptism] You **have** forgiven us and our children...and received us through Your Holy Spirit...and have so adopted us to be Your children, and [**subsequently**] sealed and confirmed the same unto us by Holy Baptism! ... We beseech You also...that You will be pleased always to govern these baptized children by Your Holy Spirit: so that they may receive a Christian and godly education, and increase and grow up in the Lord Jesus Christ [cf. Ephesians 6:1-4]; and so that [later] they may acknowledge Your fatherly goodness which You **have** shown to **them** and to **us**!"

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The *Marriage Formula*⁴⁷² combines the views of Farel and Calvin and Micron, via the *Palatine Church Order*. There, the institution is grounded in Genesis 1:26f & 2:18f & 3:15f.

Only those baptized, are to be married by the Church. So the *Formula* unites the spouses – as those who profess to be co-participants in the same covenant. Cf. Malachi 2:14f and First Peter 3:1-7.

Says the *Formula*: "Through marriage, the human race is to be constructed. If it pleases God to give children, the parents are to educate them in the true knowledge and fear of God, to His honour and to their salvation."

The *Formula* then goes on to enjoin the bridegroom as regards his bride: "Husband, you must not be bitter toward her! But you are to live with her with understanding – and to give honour to the wife as the weaker vessel!"

You, O husband, are to do this with respect to your wife. For both you and she are "co-heirs of the grace of life – so that your prayers not be hindered!" Colossians 3:19 cf. First Peter 3:7.

Next, the *Formula* enjoins the bride. "Wife, you are to help your husband in everything good and right – [and] to supervise your household well!" Clearly, the wife is here commanded to rule **her** household – and to do so subject to the husband as her head.

⁴⁷² *Doctrinal Standards* (compare n. 470 above), pp. 187f; cf. Barger's *op. cit.*, pp. 267f.

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The *Marriage Formula* then concludes: "We pray You [O Lord], that You will keep on giving Your Holy Spirit to this couple whom You have called unto holy matrimony – so that they should live in a holy way, in a true and solid faith... Will You then also bless them – as You blessed the faithful fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! Grant them Your grace – so that they (as co-heirs of the covenant which You erected with those fathers) may raise in a godly way whatever children it may please You to give them, to the honour of Your Holy Name [and] to the expansion of Your Church!"

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Next, we look at the formulated *Christian Prayers*. They were composed "for use in the meetings of believers, at home and elsewhere."

The household's *Morning Prayer* recites the Ten Commandments, and thanks God "for watching over us so faithfully this last night." It continues: "Strengthen us with Your Holy Spirit! May He lead us from now on, so that this day – as well as all the days of our life – may be dedicated to all righteousness and holiness! May our purpose always be, whatever we take to hand, to spread Your honour!"

Similarly, the formulary *Prayer Before Meals* and the *Prayer After Meals* both thank God for regenerating the Christian family – and for strengthening it with daily bread. Again, the Christian family's formulary *Evening Prayer* thanks God for the day's work, and requests a good night's sleep.

Indeed, each one of these family prayers recites also the *Lord's Prayer*. The latter includes also its fourth petition: 'Give us this day our daily bread!' That petition is an integral sub-section within⁴⁷³ the Lord's Prayer – and also within those formulary prayers at meals and in the evening.

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The 1618-19 international Synod of Dordt proclaimed all of the above documents to be authoritative for the Dutch Reformed Churches. It also dealt with catechizing – and commissioned Faukelius to compose a *Short Compendium* of the *Heidelberg Catechism* especially for use by the children.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷³ *Doctrinal Standards*, pp. 118 & 127-33.

⁴⁷⁴ Barger: *op. cit.*, pp. 179-81.

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The international Synod's *Decrees of Dordt* deal with the so-called 'Five Points of Calvinism.' *Inter alia*, at I:17, they make also the following very important statement:⁴⁷⁵

"We are to judge about the will of God from His Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy – not by nature, but on account of the covenant of grace into which they have been taken up together with their parents. Godly parents must therefore not doubt as to the election and salvation of their children whom God takes away from this life during their tender youth. Genesis 17:7; Acts 2:39; First Corinthians 7:14." See too especially Second Samuel 12:20-23f.

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We now leave the Synod of Dordt in the Netherlands, and go back – some eighty years earlier – to the situation in Britain during 1538. We shall then trace its development further onward – in England and in Scotland. Then, by way of the *Irish Articles* of 1615 and the above-mentioned international Synod of Dordt of 1618-19, we shall follow the course of events in Britain – until the Westminster Assembly of 1643-49f.

In Henry VIII's England, his Lord Privy Seal (Thomas Cromwell) and his Anglican Archbishop (Thomas Cranmer) gave important instructions in their 1538 *Royal Injunctions* to the clergy of the Church of England. There, they rightly insisted:⁴⁷⁶

"You shall expound and declare..., exhorting all parents and householders to teach their children and servants.... They are bound in conscience so to do... That done, you shall declare unto them the Ten Commandments – one by one, every Sunday and holy day – till they likewise be perfect in the same!"

Cranmer wrote to Calvin. Indeed, John Calvin himself wrote at least three letters⁴⁷⁷ to Thomas Cranmer – whom he called "most distinguished sir."

In the first, he referred⁴⁷⁸ to "the rare piety of the King of England" – Henry's son, the young Edward VI. To Edward's Regent the Lord Protector Somerset, Calvin wrote⁴⁷⁹ in 1548 and in 1550 – urging him to catechize the boy-monarch Edward.

⁴⁷⁵ *Doctrinal Standards*, pp. 83f.

⁴⁷⁶ Focus Christian Ministries Trust, 6 Orchard St., Lewes, Sussex, 1990.

⁴⁷⁷ See Bonnet's *op. cit.*, V pp. 345f & 398 & n. 1.

⁴⁷⁸ Apr. 1552, in Bonnet's *op. cit.* V p. 347.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ib.* pp. 182f & 257f & 308.

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Calvin then dedicated the first edition of his *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah* to Edward VI, in December 1550. There, John Calvin assured King Edward:⁴⁸⁰

"God has raised you up and endowed you with such excellent abilities and dispositions for defending the cause of godliness.... Not only are you celebrated for possessing a noble disposition and some seeds of virtues (which at so early an age is usually thought to be remarkable) – but for a maturity of those virtues, far beyond your years....

"Your piety especially is so highly applauded.... I expressly call upon you, most excellent king – or rather God Himself addresses you by the mouth of His servant Isaiah – charging you to proceed, to the utmost of your ability and power, in carrying forward the restoration of the Church which has been begun so successfully in your kingdom....

"You daily read and hear that this duty is enjoined on you, in the kingdom over which you rule. More especially Isaiah [49:23]...calls 'kings the nursing-fathers of the Church'.... The Prophet pronounces a woe on all kings and nations who refuse to give her [the true Church] their support.... But to you, to whom the Lord has not only given adoption..., He has likewise assigned a distinguished place among His sons."

In January 1551, Calvin dedicated also his *Commentary on the Canonical Epistles of First and Second Peter* to King Edward VI of England. There, Calvin warned the king against "the Roman Antichrist." Forthrightly, Calvin then enjoined King Edward:⁴⁸¹

"You also must bear in mind that it is a duty which belongs to your Majesty to vindicate from unworthy calumnies the true and genuine interpretation of Scripture, so that true religion may flourish.... God commanded by Moses, that as soon as a king was appointed over his people he was to take care to have a copy of the Law written out for himself.... In order that kings might know that they themselves need this remarkable doctrine, and that it is their special duty to defend and maintain it, the Lord assigns to His Law a sacred habitation in their palaces....

"Since the heroic greatness of your mind far surpasses the measure of your age, there is no reason why I should add more words to stimulate you. Farewell,

⁴⁸⁰ J. Calvin: *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947 ed., I pp. xx *seqq.*

⁴⁸¹ J. Calvin: *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First & Second Epistles of St. Peter*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963, p. 226.

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most noble king! May the Lord continue to preserve your Majesty in His faith – as He has already begun!"

In 1551, Calvin wrote⁴⁸² to Farel that he had heard "the work...had filled the king himself with extraordinary delight." So in 1552, Calvin wrote⁴⁸³ an encouraging letter to Edward.

Calvin then further dedicated to him *Four Sermons of Master John Calvin* – with a *Brief Exposition of Psalm Eighty-Seven*. Indeed, Calvin again wrote⁴⁸⁴ to Edward in March 1553.

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Sadly, the ailing Edward then died, in July 1553. He was succeeded, at his own dying request, by the godly Calvinist – Lady Jane Grey. This Queen Jane ruled for just nine days – before being butchered by agents of the Romanist 'Bloody Mary' (who then reigned from 1553 until 1558).

In 1554 Calvin wrote to Queen Jane's surviving uncle, Lord John Grey, about "the calamity that has befallen your house and...the disasters of your illustrious family." Yet, even after their murder, he could still "congratulate the illustrious Duke [of Suffolk] your brother – and your niece [Queen Jane], that singular Lady whose example deserves to be held in everlasting remembrance. To them it was granted – in death itself – to commit their victorious souls into the hands and faithful keeping of God."

Mercifully, Queen Mary of England was succeeded in 1558 by that great and illustrious monarch – the Protestant 'Good Queen Bess.' Calvin then dedicated the second edition of his *Commentary on Isaiah* to her. There, the Reformer reminded⁴⁸⁵ Queen Elizabeth that "the first edition...was dedicated to your brother King Edward – who, though a youth, greatly excelled the men of his age, and whom I wish to be held in remembrance by posterity as he deserves...."

"Amidst that wretched and lamentable dispersion of the Church and oppression of pure doctrine which raged with prodigious violence for a short period, this book – together with the whole doctrine of true godliness – was banished from England for a short period." That had occurred, after the death of Edward and the murder of Queen Jane, under the Romish 'Bloody Mary.'

⁴⁸² Bonnet's *op. cit.*, V p. 311.

⁴⁸³ *Ib.*, pp. 354f & n. 1.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 393f.

⁴⁸⁵ J. Calvin: *Commentary on Isaiah* (Eerdmans), I pp. xv *seqq.*

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"But now I trust," Calvin reminded Queen Elizabeth, "favoured by your happy reign, [that all this] will be restored to its former privileges.... [Therefore] I thought that there would be no impropriety if, to the name of a most excellent king, I should join your own name – which is regarded by all good men with not less esteem and satisfaction...."

"God has given you large and abundant grounds of boasting – by confirming you to the image of His Son.... You [Elizabeth]...should with invincible determination and unshaken firmness of mind acknowledge your obligation to your Protector and Redeemer...."

"You ought also to be stimulated...by a sacred regard to duty. For the Prophet Isaiah [43:23] demands not only from kings that they be nursing-fathers, but also from queens that they be nursing-mothers.... This duty you ought to discharge...by removing the filth of Popery...."

"This will be the crowning proof of your gratitude to God.... May the Lord guide you, most illustrious Queen, by the Spirit of wisdom; uphold you with invincible courage; protect and enrich your Highness with every kind of blessings!"

In May 1559, John Calvin wrote⁴⁸⁶ to Queen Elizabeth's Secretary, the Puritan Baron William Cecil. Explained the French-Swiss Reformer: "Two years ago, John Knox in a private conversation asked my opinion respecting female government. I frankly answered that...certain women had sometimes been so gifted that the singular blessing of God was conspicuous in them, and made it manifest that they had been raised up by the providence of God...."

"I here instanced Huldah and Deborah. I added to the same effect that God promised by the mouth of Isaiah that queens should be the nursing-mothers of the Church.... I shall...always cherish the most profound respect for your most excellent queen!"

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Calvin's various pupils from Scotland shared his views on daily family worship. Even in 1556, their *Form of Prayers* was published.⁴⁸⁷ It included 'A Form of Prayers to be used in Private Houses Every Morning and Evening.'

⁴⁸⁶ Bonnet's *op. cit.*, pp. 47f.

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. D.F. Kelly's *Family Worship*, in Smith & Lachman's *op. cit.* p. 118; and see J.K. Cameron's *The First Book of Discipline* Edinburgh: St. Andrew's Press, 1972, n. 27.

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Indeed, also Knox's *1556 Liturgy* contained a 'Form of Prayers' to be used in family worship – morning and evening.⁴⁸⁸

Knox gave this advice, in his 1556 *Letter of Wholesome Counsel*:⁴⁸⁹ "Brethren, you are ordained by God to rule and govern your own houses in His true fear and according to His Word. Within your houses, I say, in some cases you are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants and family are your bishopric and charge.

"Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have studied to plant virtue in them, and [to] repress vice. And therefore I say you must make them partakers in reading, exhorting and in making common prayers – which I would in every house were used once a day at least!"

Together with other Reformers in Scotland, Knox authored also the *First Book of Discipline* – in 1560. There, it was enjoined⁴⁹⁰ that the head of every home alias "every master of household must be commanded either to instruct or cause to be instructed his children, servants and family in the principles of the Christian Religion....

"Every year at the least, public examination [is to] be had by the Minister and Elders, of the knowledge of every person within the kirk – to wit, that every master and mistress of household come themselves and their family – before the Minister and the Elders and give confession of their faith.... If they stubbornly contemn and suffer their children and servants to continue in wilful ignorance, the discipline of the kirk must proceed against them to excommunication!" The Church of Scotland would re-affirm this in 1647.

The *First Book of Discipline* went on: "Men, women [and also the] children would be exhorted to exercise themselves in Psalms.... In private houses, we think expedient that the most grave and discrete person use the common prayers at morn[ing] and at night for the comfort and instruction of others."

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Commenting on the subsequent developments in Scotland, Ecclesiastical History Professor Rev. Dr. J.K. Cameron in his work on *The First Book of*

⁴⁸⁸ See n. 487 above. Bucer (*De Regno Christi* 2:9 & *Opera Latina* 15:114) even recommended a law be made requiring parents to educate their children in the Christian Faith.

⁴⁸⁹ See Cameron's *op. cit.*, n. 27; & Laing's ed. of *Knox's Works* 4:136f & 207f.

⁴⁹⁰ J. Knox's *First Book of Discipline*, XI:7-9.

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Discipline observed:⁴⁹¹ "Parliament ordained in 1579 that all gentlemen and householders should have a Bible and Psalm Book in the vulgar tongue in their homes, for the better instruction of themselves and their families in the knowledge of God. Severe penalties were prescribed for defaulters.

In 1596, the General Assembly – in condemning 'an universal coldness and decay of zeal in all Estates' – referred to the lack of 'religious exercises' in families, both 'of prayer and of reading of the Word.'⁴⁹²

However, according to Paterson,⁴⁹³ already the 1590 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland adopted measures for securing a general and national *Catechism*. Indeed, the 1592 General Assembly stated it "needful that every pastor travel with his flock, [so] that they may buy the same book and read it in their families – whereby they may be the better instructed; and that the same be read and learned...in place of the *Little Catechism*" of John Calvin.

Especially among the Scottish Presbyterians, Church-Courts now attempted to determine the faithfulness of Christians as regards regular family worship. To this end, a number of measures were enacted.

By act of the 1596 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland – which was later ratified in December 1638 – presbytery visits to congregations were to inquire:⁴⁹⁴ "Do the Elders visit the families within the quarter and bounds assigned to each of them? Are they careful to have the worship of God set up in the families of their bounds [or wards]?"

Also the Minister of the Word was directed to ask, during pastoral visits in the homes: "Whether God be worshipped in the family – by prayers, praises, and reading of the Scriptures?" He was also to inquire about the household servants (if any): "Whether they attend family and public worship?" Indeed, he was also to determine: "If there be catechizing in the family?"

This strengthened the long-standing custom of daily family worship throughout Scotland. Even centuries later, the practice was still commendably described also by Scotland's great infidel poet Robbie Burns (1758-96).

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⁴⁹¹ Cameron's *op. cit.*, n. 27.

⁴⁹² See nn. 489 & 491 above.

⁴⁹³ *Op. cit.*, p. v.

⁴⁹⁴ J.W. Alexander: *Thoughts on Family Worship, Harrisonburg Va.: Sprinkle, 1981, p. 24.*

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Burns was certainly no admirer of Calvinistic Presbyterianism. Just study, for example, his sarcastic satires such as: *The Ordination*; *The Holy Fair*; *Holy Willie's Prayer*; and *Epitaph on Holy Willie*.

However, even Burns deeply admired 'pure religion and undefiled' (*cf.* James 1:27). Such, he believed, was that of the simple and sincere peasants of Scotland – alias the 'cottars' – during their daily family worship especially after supper.

Burns's following description of the regular household devotions of these Presbyterian peasants assists us better to understand the Biblical and historic Scottish Presbyterian practice of daily family worship. To help the reader now, we ourselves enclose below in square brackets [] – the modern English meaning of the more obscure old Scottish terms in the following⁴⁹⁵ excerpts from Burns's powerful poem *The Cottar's Saturday Night*:

"But now the supper crowns their simple board,
the halesome parritch [wholesome porridge], chief of Scotia's food....

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
they round the ingle [hearth] form a circle wide;
the sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace
the big ha' Bible, ance [once] his father's pride....
He wales [selects] a portion with judicious care;
and, 'Let us worship GOD!' he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
they tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
perhaps DUNDEE's wild-warbling measures rise;
or plaintive MARTYRS, worthy of the name;
or noble ELGIN beets [adds fuel to] the heaven-ward flame....

The priest-like father reads the sacred page –
how Abram was the friend of GOD on high;
or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
with Amalek's ungracious progeny....

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme –
how guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
how He, Who bore in Heav'n the second Name,
had not on Earth whereon to lay His head....

Then, kneeling down, to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING,

⁴⁹⁵*The Poetical Works of Robert Burns*, London: Walter Scott, n.d. (circa 1901). pp. 68f.

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the saint, the father, and the husband, prays;
hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'
that thus they all shall meet in future days....

Compar'd with this – how poor Religion's pride,
in all the pomp of method and of art,
when men display to congregations wide,
devotion's ev'ry grace – except the heart!

The Pow'r incens'd the pageant will desert
the pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
but, haply, in some cottage far apart,
may hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul;
and, in His book of life, the inmates poor enrol....

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
that makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
princes and lords are but the breath of kings.
'An honest man's the noblest work of God!'
And certes [certainly], in fair virtue's heavenly road,
the cottage leaves the palace far behind...!"

* * * * *

The famous *Irish Articles* were drawn up in 1615 – apparently by the godly Puritan Anglican Archbishop James Ussher. He was later appointed to the historic Westminster Assembly, and there is no doubt that the theology of the latter body – as expressed especially in its *Confession of Faith* – was derived by and large precisely from Ussher's *Irish Articles* (especially arts. 1-5 & 21 & 46 & 90). Among other things, they teach the following:⁴⁹⁶

"The ground of our religion and the rule of faith and all saving truth is the Word of God...given by the inspiration of God... The other books, commonly called apocryphal, did not proceed from such inspiration... The Scriptures ought to be translated out of the original tongues into all languages, for the common use of all men. Neither is any person to be discouraged from reading the Bible in such a language as he doth understand, but seriously exhorted to read the same with great humility and reverence.... Although there be some hard things in the Scripture...nothing of that kind is spoken under dark mysteries in one place which is not in other places spoken more familiarly and plainly, to the capacity both of learned and unlearned....

⁴⁹⁶In ed. P. Schaff's *Creeeds of Christendom*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983 rep., III pp. 526-42.

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"Man being at the beginning created according to the image of God..., had the covenant of the law ingrafted in his heart.... Our duty towards God is to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him with all our heart.... The baptism of infants is to be retained in the Church, as agreeable to the Word of God."

It can readily be seen how the above strengthens daily family worship. The same is true of the relevant documents produced by the international 1618f Synod of Dordt, dealt with previously above.

Already George Wishart had introduced the *First Swiss Confession* into Scotland in 1536. John Knox continued to use the *1556 Genevan Service Book*, also after his return to Scotland in 1559. The Genevan formulas were bodily incorporated into the 1560 Scottish *Book of Common Order*. Supplementary to all of the above, the Scottish Church also approved and recommended the use of *Calvin's Catechism*, the *Second Swiss Confession*, and the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

The harmony between the Reformed Church in Switzerland and that also in England, is seen in correspondence. There was that between Calvin in Geneva – and Cranmer, Somerset, Edward VI and A Lasco in England. There was also that between Bullinger and Peter Martyr in Switzerland – and Hooper and Jewel in England (as recorded in the *Zurich Letters*).

The Englishmen Ames and Perkins taught in the Netherlands, and both M'Crie and Warfield agree that the covenant theology of the Continent was deeply imbedded in Britain long before Westminster. Indeed, this is why King James of England and Scotland sent British theologians to the Synod of Dordt – and why Dordt theologians such as Voetius had such a profound impact on Britons like Burgess and others, before and during the Westminster Assembly.

Thus, already in 1622, Westminster's William Gouge wrote his *Domesticall Duties* – on family religion. Robert Cawdrey wrote his tract *A Godly Form of Household Government*. Indeed, his son Daniel Cawdrey – raised precisely in such a godly household – later filled a vacancy at the Westminster Assembly.

* * * * *

In the middle of the seventeenth century, after very much Bible study on such matters, the Westminster Assembly was convened. Meeting for at least nine years, it was probably the greatest convention of theologians the World has ever seen. Attended by delegates from the Channel Islands and even from France, it formulated its various authoritative documents precisely for the promotion of religious uniformity throughout England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales – and also for Britain's colonies overseas in Canada and Colonial America.

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The teachings of the Bible are admirably summarized, both explicitly and implicitly, in the various doctrinal standards produced at the Westminster Assembly. Below, we show the great relevance to daily household devotions – of the Scripture passages referred to in these many writings.

In Westminster's *Confession of Faith*,⁴⁹⁷ all mankind regardless of age is held to be "inexcusable" before God – ever since the fall. This is so, because of the continuing "light of nature" – and also because of the light of Scripture, where God has now committed His saving revelation "wholly unto writing. Proverbs 22:17-21 & Luke 1:3-4" *etc.* Hence, also for families and children, Second Timothy 1:3-5 *cf.* 3:14f, this "maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary. Second Timothy 3:15" *etc.*

Hence, according to Westminster,⁴⁹⁸ also for families together with their children – see "Second Timothy 3:15" above – "**all** the [sixty-six] Books of the **Old** and **New** Testaments...are given by inspiration of God to be **the** rule of faith and life. Luke 16:26,31; Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 22:18-19; Second Timothy 3:16" *cf.* 3:14-15 & 1:3-5.

Indeed, Westminster again implies, neither the "Apocrypha" nor "other human writings" (or uninspired books like 'Daily Bread' and 'Daily Light' and 'Religious Stories for Children') should be used for purposes such as daily family worship. For only the Bible, Holy Scripture alone, is now "the Word of God. Second Peter 1:19,21; Second Timothy 3:16; First John 5:9; First Thessalonians 2:13."

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So the Bible alias Holy Scripture is altogether adequate. Indeed, it is sufficient also for daily family worship involving even tiny babies!

For, as Westminster again assures⁴⁹⁹ us: "The whole counsel of God...is either expressly set down in Scripture or...may be deduced from Scripture – unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Second Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8-9; Second Thessalonians 2:2.

"Nevertheless, we acknowledge...that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God...which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word which are always to be observed. First Corinthians 11:13-14 & First Corinthians 14:26,40."

⁴⁹⁷ *W.C.F.* 1:1.

⁴⁹⁸ *W.C.F.* 1:2-4.

⁴⁹⁹ *W.C.F.* 1:6.

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The latter would certainly apply also to family worship at home. First Corinthians 14:34-35 *cf.* Deuteronomy 6:6-9 *etc.* For, continues the *Westminster Confession*,⁵⁰⁰ "all things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all (Second Peter 3:16). Yet those things which are necessary to be known...for salvation are so clearly propounded...in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned but [also] the unlearned – in a due use of the ordinary means – may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them. Psalm 119:105,130."

Especially the latter verse – 'the entrance of Your Word...gives understanding to the **simple**' – is very significant. It means exactly what it says. It clearly implies that even "the unlearned" babies and fetuses, when the Bible is read also at daily family worship "in some place of Scripture or other" – and "in a due use of the ordinary means" either right then or later – indeed "may attain unto a sufficient understanding" either right then or later of all "those things which are necessary to be known...for salvation."

Hence, continues Westminster,⁵⁰¹ "all the people of God" – and thus even little children at daily family worship – "have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear [or respect] of God to read and search them (John 5:39)." For this reason, "the Old Testament in Hebrew...and the New Testament in Greek...are to be translated into the [popular tongue alias the] vulgar language of every nation unto which they come. First Corinthians 14:6-12,24-28."

With "the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner." Colossians 3:16 to 4:2. Thus all, "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope. Romans 15:4."

This obviously involves the leader of the household in explaining the Scriptures at family worship. Compare First Corinthians 14:34f – 'Let your women keep silence in the **churches**! ... If they wish to **enquire** about anything – let them ask their menfolk **at home**!'

For, as Westminster insists,⁵⁰² "when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture...it must be searched and known by [or from] other places that speak more clearly. Second Peter 1:20-21 & Acts 15:15-16."

⁵⁰⁰ *W.C.F.* 1:7.

⁵⁰¹ *W.C.F.* 1:8.

⁵⁰² *W.C.F.* 1:9-10.

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Indeed, "the supreme Judge by Which all controversies of religion are to be determined...in Whose sentence [or opinion] we are to rest, can be no Other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture. Matthew 22:39,32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:25."

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Now God – continues Westminster⁵⁰³ – "created man, male and female..., having the Law of God written in their hearts.... While they kept [it], they were happy in their communion with God. Genesis 1:17; Romans 2:14-15; Genesis 1:26-28" *cf.* 2:1-3 & 2:21-25 *etc.*

But alas! Soon, "our first parents...sinned. Genesis 3:13 & Second Corinthians 11:3." Indeed, explains Westminster,⁵⁰⁴ because they were and are "the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed...to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation. Genesis 1:27-28; Acts 17:26; Romans 5:12-19; First Corinthians 15:21-22,45,49."

This sin transgressed God's first covenant with mankind. Hosea 6:7. However, even with fallen man, explains Westminster,⁵⁰⁵ "the Lord was pleased to make a second – commonly called the Covenant of Grace." Genesis 3:15. Thereby: God promised "to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, His Holy Spirit – to make them willing and able to believe. Ezekiel 36:26-27 & John 6:44-45."

This is why the Son of God did "take upon Him[self] man's nature (John 1:1-14 *etc.*) – with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof." Yet Westminster adds⁵⁰⁶ He did so "without sin (Hebrews 2:14f & 4:15) – being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; in the womb of the virgin Mary; of her substance. Luke 1:27,31,35 & Galatians 4:4."

Indeed, "all those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased...to call by His Word and Spirit...to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Romans 8:30; Second Thessalonians 2:13-14; Second Corinthians 3:3,6."

Consequently, claims Westminster,⁵⁰⁷ "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit. Luke 18:15-16; Acts 2:38-39; John 3:3,5; First John 5:12; Romans 8:9.... So also are other elect persons who

⁵⁰³ *W.C.F.* 4:2.

⁵⁰⁴ *W.C.F.* 6:1-3.

⁵⁰⁵ *W.C.F.* 7:3.

⁵⁰⁶ *W.C.F.* 8:2.

⁵⁰⁷ *W.C.F.* 10:1-3.

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are incapable of being outwardly called by the Ministry of the Word. First John 5:12 & Acts 4:12."

The above surely implies the need also for regular family worship – especially among those who profess to be Christians, and their seed. This means it is needed not just by adults and small children – but also by the only-just-born, as well as by the not-yet-born, from the time of their conception onward.

For "all those that are justified, God vouchsafeth...to make partakers of the grace of adoption. Ephesians 1:5 & Galatians 4:4. Thereby, they are: taken into the number and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God (Romans 8:17 & John 1:12); have His Name put upon them (Jeremiah 14:9; Second Corinthians 6:18; Revelations 3:12)" *cf.* Matthew 28:19 & Acts 2:38-39 *etc.*; "receive the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15); have access to the throne of grace with boldness (Ephesians 3:12 & Romans 5:2); are enabled to cry [out] 'Abba Father!' (Galatians 4:4); are pitied (Psalm 103:13), protected (Proverbs 14:26), provided for (Matthew 6:30-32 *etc.*), and chastened by Him as by a father (Hebrews 12:6)."

Indeed, they are also "sealed to the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30)" *cf.* 1:13 & 5:25f & 6:1-4 – "as heirs of everlasting salvation. First Peter 1:3-4" *cf.* 1:23f & 2:1-2f & 3:1-7 *etc.*⁵⁰⁸

Needless to say, this requires the presence also of Christian babies at daily family worship. For baptism replaces circumcision (Colossians 2:11f); circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:11); and that seal was to be given even to the tiny children of those who professed salvation (Genesis 17:7f).

"Through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ...the saints" – and even the tiny ones (*cf.* First Corinthians 7:14) – "grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.... Faith is different in degrees, weak or strong. Hebrews 5:13-14" *etc.*⁵⁰⁹ Yet without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Thus, even infants require faith – and therefore need to be regenerated. John 3:3f compare the *Westminster Confession* 10:3.

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Furthermore, "prayer with thanksgiving...is by God required of all men.... Philippians 4:6 & Psalm 65:2." Indeed, "prayer" and "the reading of the Scriptures...and conscionable hearing of the Word...with understanding, faith and

⁵⁰⁸ *W.C.F.* 12:1.

⁵⁰⁹ *W.C.F.* 13:3 & 14:3.

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reverence" – and the "singing of psalms with grace in the heart" – "are all parts of the ordinary worship of God.... First John 5:14; Acts 15:21; Revelation 1:3; James 1:22; Acts 10:33; Matthew 13:19; Hebrews 4:2; Isaiah 66:2; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; James 5:13; Matthew 28:19; Acts 4:42f."

For Jehovah the Lord "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families, daily. Malachi 1:11; First Timothy 2:8f; John 4:23; Jeremiah 10:25; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Job 1:5; Second Samuel 6:18-20; First Peter 3:7; Acts 10:2; Matthew 6:11." Indeed, even "the law of nature" requires that "a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God" – and particularly "one day in seven for a sabbath. Exodus 20:8-11" *etc.*⁵¹⁰

Now, continues the *Westminster Confession*,⁵¹¹ "marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife (Genesis 2:18); for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue; and of the church with an holy seed. Malachi 2:15." For "the Visible Church...consists of all those throughout the World that profess the true religion, together with their children. First Corinthians 1:2; 7:14; Acts 2:39; Ezekiel 16:20-21; Romans 11:16; Genesis 3:15; 17:7."

Indeed, this above-mentioned Visible Church "is...the house and family of God. Ephesians 2:19 & 3:15." As co-saints together with their Christian parents, the baptized children inside the Visible Church have spiritual fellowship also and indeed particularly with their own parents – and *vice-versa*. In addition, they also "have communion in each other's gifts and graces...to their mutual edification. First Thessalonians 5:11,14; First John 3:16-18; Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:46" *etc.*

Furthermore, continues the *Confession*,⁵¹² the "sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace (Romans 4:11 & Genesis 17:7-10)...to represent Christ...and to confirm our interest in Him. Galatians 3:17-27."

They also function "to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the World. Romans 15:8; Exodus 12:48; Genesis 34:14." Indeed, they solemnly "engage them to the service of God in Christ – according to His Word. Romans 6:3-4....

⁵¹⁰ *W.C.F.* 21:1-7.

⁵¹¹ *W.C.F.* 24:2 & 25:2 & 26:1-2.

⁵¹² *W.C.F.* 27:1 & 28:1-6.

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"Baptism is a sacrament...of regeneration...to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3-4.... Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized. Genesis 17:7-9; Colossians 2:11-12; Acts 2:38-39; Romans 4:11-12; First Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Mark 10:13f & Luke 18:15.... It be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance. Exodus 4:24-26.... Yet...the efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered. John 3:5-8."

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The *Westminster Larger Catechism* makes this even plainer. Indeed, it clearly links⁵¹³ the reading of Holy Scripture at family worship attended also by covenant infants – with the baptism of such babies into membership of Christ's Visible Church.

Thus it vehemently insists that "although all are not to be permitted to **read the Word** publickly to the congregation, yet all sorts of people are **bound** to read it apart by themselves and **with their families**. Deuteronomy 6:6-8; Genesis 18:17; Psalm 78:5-7. To which end, the Holy Scriptures are to be translated out of the original into vulgar languages. First Corinthians 14:6,9,11f,16,24,27f."

Indeed, the Biblical practice of infant baptism obligates parents to hold such regular family worship together with their baptized babies as co-members of Christ's Visible Church. "Baptism is a sacrament...wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost to be a sign and seal of...regeneration by His Spirit. Ephesians 5:26 & Titus 3:5."

In fact, baptism is a sign "of adoption (Galatians 3:26-27) and resurrection unto everlasting life (Romans 6:6 & First Corinthians 15:29)." Indeed, it is a sign "whereby the parties baptized...enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's. Romans 6:4....

"Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out[side] of the Visible Church.... But infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ and obedience to Him – are in that respect within the covenant and to be baptized."

The *Larger Catechism* next refers⁵¹⁴ to "the needful...duty of improving our baptism." This "is to be performed by us, all our life long. Romans 6:4-6." This is to be done "by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it..., and [of]

⁵¹³ *W.L.C.*, Q. 156 *cf.* 165f.

⁵¹⁴ *W.L.C.*, Q. 167.

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our solemn vow made therein (Romans 6:3-5)." Also, this is further to be done "by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament. Romans 4:11-12 & First Peter 3:21."

Indeed, we are to keep on "endeavouring to live by faith. Galatians 3:26-27." For we are "to have our conversation [or walk of life] in holiness and righteousness (Romans 6:22) – as those that have therein given up their names to Christ. Acts 2:38f."

Finally, the *Larger Catechism* deals also with prayer⁵¹⁵ – including family prayer and thus also, at least implicitly, daily family worship. Because "God...[is able to] fulfil the desires of all (Psalm 145:18-19)," and because He only is to "be believed in and worshipped with religious worship – prayer, which is a special part thereof, is to be made by all. First Corinthians 1:2."

Significantly, "the preface of the Lord's Prayer – contained in these words: 'Our Father Which art in Heaven' – teacheth us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of [or in] His fatherly goodness and our interest therein (Luke 11:13)." Indeed, it teaches us to do so "with reverence" – and "also to pray with, and for, others."

The above preface of the Lord's Prayer is followed by six petitions. Explains the *Larger Catechism*: "In the fourth petition (which is 'Give us this day our daily bread!')..., we pray for ourselves and others that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day..., may...enjoy a competent portion" of such daily bread and all other daily necessities.

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There is also the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. The 1648 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland found it to be "agreeable to the Word of God." It was therefore approved "to be a directory for catechising such as are of weaker capacity" – meaning, especially, baptized but non-communicant covenant children.

Significantly, it states that "the Second Commandment requireth...all such religious worship...as God hath appointed in His Word. Deuteronomy 32:46 & Matthew 28:20."

It says too: "The Fourth Commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as He hath appointed in His Word. Deuteronomy 5:12-14."

⁵¹⁵ W.L.C., QQ. 156 & 179 & 189 & 193.

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It further states that "the Fifth Commandment ['honour your father and your mother!'] requireth the preserving [of] the honour and [the] performing [of] the duties belonging to every one in their several places and relations. Exodus 20:12 & Ephesians 5:21" *cf.* 6:1-4.

Last, it shows the connection between the Fifth Commandment and daily family worship. For it also declares that "the Lord's Prayer" – which "teacheth us to draw near to God...as **children** to a **father**," and that "we should pray **with** and for **others** (Romans 8:15 & Luke 11:13)" – enjoins us in the fourth petition to **pray**: "Give us this day our **daily** bread!"⁵¹⁶

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In the same year 1643, and subsequently, a religious undertaking was given to work for the "Reformation and Defence of Religion" in "the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland." That undertaking was reduced to writing, under the name of *The Solemn League and Covenant*.

From that document, it is clear that the above undertaking was "agreed upon by Commissioners from the Parliament and [from the Westminster] Assembly of divines in England – with Commissioners of the Convention of Estates and General Assembly in Scotland." It was thus "approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; and by both Houses of Parliament and Assembly of divines in England"; and also by the Parliament of Scotland.

It provides for "the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." It does this, also by promoting "uniformity in religion" and especially in the "directory for worship and catechising." It does so, in order "that we and our posterity after us may as brethren live in faith and love, and [so that] the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us."⁵¹⁷

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The Westminster *Directory for Worship* plainly states: "Family worship – which ought to be performed by every family, ordinarily morning and evening – consists [triumphantly!] in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and singing praises." Thus Rev. Professor Dr. Douglas F. Kelly, in his chapter *Family Worship: Biblical*,

⁵¹⁶ W.S.C., QQ. 50 & 58 & 64 & 99 & 100 & 104.

⁵¹⁷ See: *The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland*, p. 276.

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Reformed, and Viable for Today – within (editors) Smith and Lachman's *Worship in the Presence of God*.⁵¹⁸

Now Westminster formulated a *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. There, it declares⁵¹⁹ that "beside publick reading of the Holy Scriptures, every person that can read – is to be exhorted to read the Scriptures privately. And all others that cannot read if not disabled by age...are likewise to be exhorted to learn to read and to have a Bible."

Very clearly, this implies not only family worship. It also implies that all covenant children be taught to read as such; to read Holy Scripture; and to read from their own Bible – precisely there.

The *Directory* further provides that the public preaching is to be done "plainly – [so] that the meanest [such as each and every child present] may understand." This obviously applies even to a "child to be baptized" which has been born to a Christian parent.

Indeed, it applies not only after his or her infant baptism, but also before that. For "the promise is made to **believers and their seed**....

"The seed and posterity of the faithful, **born within the Church**, have by their birth interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it...no less than the children of Abraham in the time of the Old Testament.... They are **Christians** and federally holy **before** baptism – and **therefore** to be **baptized**." Thus Westminster's *Directory*.

According to the *Directory*, the Minister is then "to exhort the parent 'to consider the great mercy of God to him and his child; to bring up the child in the knowledge of the grounds of the Christian religion, and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'.... This being done, prayer is also to be joined with the word of institution, for sanctifying the water to this spiritual use; and the Minister is to pray to this or the like effect:

"That the Lord, Who hath not left us as strangers without the covenant of promise, but called us to the privileges of His ordinances, would graciously vouchsafe to sanctify and bless His own ordinance of baptism at this time; that He would join the inward baptism of His Spirit with the outward baptism of water; make this baptism to the infant a seal of adoption, remission of sin, regeneration, and eternal life and all other promises of the covenant of grace; that the child may be planted into the likeness of the death and resurrection of Christ;

⁵¹⁸ Greenville Seminary Press, S.C., 1992, p. 116.

⁵¹⁹ *Sub. Standards* (see n. 516 above), pp. 290-300.

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and that, the body of sin being destroyed in him, he may serve God in newness of life **all his days.**'

"Then the Minister is to demand the name of the child; which being told him, he is to say (calling the child by his name) *I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.*

"As he pronounceth these words, he is to baptize the child with water. Which, for the manner of doing it, is not only lawful but sufficient and most expedient, to be by pouring or sprinkling of the water on the face of the child" in the Name of the Triune God. This is because the Lord "not only...numbereth us among His saints, but is pleased also to bestow upon our children this singular token and badge of His love in Christ.... He daily bringeth some into the bosom of His Church to be partakers of His inestimable benefits purchased...for the...increase of His Church....

"If he be taken out of this life in his infancy, the Lord...would be pleased to receive him up into glory. And if he live..., the Lord would so teach him by His Word and Spirit...that by faith he may prevail against the devil...and so be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

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Especially on each Lord's Day, there are to be "private preparations of every person and family, by prayer for themselves...[so] that all the people meet so timely for publick worship" – and so "that the whole congregation may be present at the beginning and with one heart solemnly join together in all parts of the publick worship and not depart till after the [final] blessing....

"What time is vacant between or after the solemn meetings of the congregation in publick, [should] be spent in reading, meditation, [and] repetition of sermons; especially by calling their families to an account of what they have heard, and catechising of them...; singing of psalms...; [and] accounting the sabbath a delight."

The *Directory* then considers 'The Solemnization of Marriage.' There, it declares: "Although marriage be no sacrament..., yet because such as marry, are to marry in the Lord" – "we judge it expedient that marriage be solemnized by a lawful Minister of the Word.... Because all relations are sanctified by the Word and prayer, the Minister is to pray for a blessing."

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He must remind those marrying of "ends of marriage, with the conjugal duties which in all faithfulness they are to perform each to [the] other – exhorting them to study the Holy Word of God, [so] that they may learn to live by faith..., praying much **with** and for one another; watching over and provoking each other to love and good works; and to live together as the heirs of the grace of life." First Timothy 4:3-5 & First Peter 3:7.

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'Concerning Publick Solemn Fasting' the *Directory* states: "Before the publick meeting, **each family** and person **apart** are privately to use all religious care to prepare their hearts [*cf.* Zechariah 12:12f].... Congregations may keep days of fasting.... **Families** may do the same."

'Concerning the Observation of Days of Publick Thanksgiving' the *Directory* declares: "Because singing of psalms is of all other the most proper ordinance for expressing of joy and thanksgiving, let some pertinent psalm or psalms be sung for that purpose before or after the reading of some portion of the Word.... Then let [one]...proceed to further exhortation and prayer."

'Of Singing of Psalms' the *Directory* also declares: "It is the duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by singing of psalms together in the congregation, and also privately **in the family**.... The voice is to be tunably...ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with understanding and with grace in the heart, making melody to the Lord.... Every one that can read, is to have a psalm-book.... All others not disabled...are to be exhorted to learn to read."

On the family worship debates at the Westminster Assembly leading up to the above declarations, see our Preface above. There, we also gave examples of the family worship practices of several of those divines.

* * * * *

Contemporary to Westminster, also the Church of Scotland drew up a *Directory for Family Worship*. In 1647, it drew up various 'Directions of the General Assembly Concerning Secret and Private Worship and Mutual Edification.' In these,⁵²⁰ it insisted that the "private worship of families be pressed and set up"; so "that, with national reformation, the profession and power of godliness both personal and domestick be advanced."

⁵²⁰ *Ib.*, pp. 322-24.

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Pastors were "to press persons of all sorts to perform this duty morning and evening.... Also, it is incumbent to the head of every family to have a care that both themselves and all within their charge be daily diligent herein.

"The ordinary duties comprehended...in families when they are convened..., are these: First, Prayer and Praises, performed with a special reference...to the present case of the family and every member thereof.... Next, Reading of the Scriptures, with catechising in a plain way" – so that even the simplest may thereby be "made more capable to understand the Scriptures when they are read."

There should also be "godly conferences" or discussion, "tending to the edification of all the members" of the family. There should further be "admonition and rebuke, upon just reasons, from those who have authority in the family....

"In every family where there is any that can read, the Holy Scriptures should be read ordinarily to the family – and it is commendable that thereafter they confer and...make some good use of what hath been read and heard.... If any sin be reproved in the Word read...or if any judgment be threatened..., use may be made to stir up themselves to employ Christ for strength to enable them for doing the commanded duty....

"In all [of] which, the master of the family is to have the chief hand." However, "any member of the family may propone a question or [a] doubt for resolution." See First Corinthians 14:34f.

"The head of the family is to take care that none of the family withdraw himself from any part of family-worship.... The Minister is to stir up such as are lazy, and train up such as are weak....

"In other families, where the head of the family is unfit..., another constantly residing in the family – approved by the Minister and Session – may be employed in that service.... If a Minister...be brought to any family, it is requisite that at no time he convene a part of the family for worship, secluding the rest – except in singular cases...which (in Christian prudence) need not or ought not to be imparted to others....

"At family worship, a special care is to be had that each family keep by themselves – neither requiring, inviting, nor admitting persons from divers families – unless it be those who are lodged with them, or at meals, or otherwise with them upon some lawful occasion.... Meetings of persons of divers families (except in cases mentioned in these Directions) are to be disapproved, as tending to the hinderance of the religious exercise of each family by itself..., to the rending of the families....

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"On the Lord's Day, after...the whole family together have sought the Lord...to fit them for the publick worship..., the master of the family ought to take care that all within his charge repair to the publick worship, [so] that he and they [including the small children] may join with the rest of the congregation....

"The publick worship being finished, after prayer he should take an account [of] what they have heard; and thereafter, to spend the rest of the time which they may spare, in catechising and in spiritual conferences upon the Word of God. Or else, going apart, they ought to apply themselves to reading, meditation, and secret prayer....

"So many as can conceive prayer, ought to make use of that gift of God. Albeit, those who are rude and weaker, may begin at a set form of prayer. But...the spirit of prayer...is given to all the children of God in some measure....

"Persons of eminency (and all Elders of the Kirk) not only ought to stir up themselves and [their] families to diligence herein, but also to concur effectually that in all other families where they have power and charge, the said exercises be conscionably performed....

"Besides the ordinary duties in families, which are above mentioned, extraordinary duties – both of humiliation and thanksgiving – are to be carefully performed in families when the Lord, by extraordinary occasions (private or publick) calleth for them....

"Specially in this time wherein profanity abounds...every member of this Kirk ought to stir up themselves and one another to the duties of mutual edification" – so that "the power and practice of godliness...may be cherished and advanced, and all impiety and mocking of religious exercises suppressed."

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Now this *Directory for Family Worship* was "approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, [as a Directory] for Piety and Uniformity in Secret and Private Worship and Mutual Edification."⁵²¹

This was done at the same time⁵²² the corresponding chapter 21:3-6 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* itself was adopted – in August 1647. Indeed, at

⁵²¹ *Ib.*, p. 321.

⁵²² *Ib.*, p. vii.

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its Tenth Session, that Scottish Presbyterian Assembly even provided for "censuring such as neglect family worship."⁵²³

Declared the relevant 1647 Act, at Edinburgh: "The General Assembly, after mature deliberation, doth approve the...Rules and Directions for cherishing piety...; and doth appoint Ministers and Ruling Elders in each congregation: to take special care that these Directions be observed and followed...; and to reprove or censure (according to the quality of the offence) such as shall be found to be reprobable."

Regarding "family worship, the Assembly doth further require and appoint Ministers and Ruling Elders to make diligent search and enquiry in the congregations committed to their charge respectively, whether there be among them any family or families which...neglect this necessary duty. And if any such family be found, the head of the family is to be first admonished privately to amend his fault...

"In case of his continuing therein, he is to be gravely and sadly reprovved by the Session. After which reproof, if he be found still to neglect family worship – let him be, for his obstinacy in such an offence, suspended and debarred from the Lord's Supper, as being justly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein, till he amend!"

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There is also the valuable treatise known as the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*. This is a very practical application of the doctrine of the *Westminster Confession*.

Though the *Sum of Saving Knowledge* is without any express Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, it has for ages had its place together with the *Westminster Standards*. Indeed, since the era of the Second Reformation from 1643 onward it has been an authoritative *de facto* document of the Scottish Presbyterian Church.⁵²⁴

The *Sum of Saving Knowledge* states:⁵²⁵ "The almighty and eternal God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (three distinct Persons in the one and the same undivided Godhead equally infinite in all perfection) – did, before time, most wisely decree for His own glory whatsoever cometh to pass in time.... This God, in six days, made all things [out] of nothing – very good in their own kind....

⁵²³ *Ib.*, p. 322.

⁵²⁴ *Ib.*, pp. vii-viii.

⁵²⁵ *Ib.*, pp. 252-64.

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"He made our first parents, Adam and Eve – the root of mankind – both upright and able to keep the Law written in their heart. He entered into a covenant or contract with them and their posterity in them, to give them eternal life upon condition of perfect personal obedience.... This is the covenant of works....

"Our first parents, being enticed by Satan...speaking in a serpent, did break the covenant of works in eating the forbidden fruit. Whereby they and their posterity – being in their loins as branches in the root, and comprehended in the same covenant with them – became not only liable to eternal death but also lost all ability to please God....

"Yet God, for the glory of His rich grace, hath revealed in His Word a way to save sinners – viz. by faith in Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, by virtue of and according to the tenor of the covenant of redemption made and agreed upon between God the Father and God the Son in the council of the Trinity before the world began....

"The outward means and ordinances for making men partakers of the covenant of grace are so wisely dispensed as that the elect shall be infallibly converted and saved by them... The means are especially these four. 1, the Word of God. 2, the Sacraments. 3, kirk government. 4, prayer.

"In the Word of God preached by sent messengers, the Lord makes offer of grace to all sinners upon condition of faith in Jesus Christ; and whosoever do confess their sin, accept of Christ offered, and submit themselves to His ordinance – He will have both them and their children received into the honour and privileges of the covenant of grace.

"By the Sacraments, God will have the covenant sealed for confirming the bargain on the foresaid condition. By kirk government, He will have them hedged in, and helped forward unto the keeping of the covenant. And by prayer, He will have His own glorious grace, promised in the covenant, to be **daily** drawn forth, acknowledged and employed....

"God hath made a gift of Christ unto His people, as a Commander. Which office He faithfully exerciseth, by giving to His Kirk and people laws and ordinances...and **governors**...to see that His laws be obeyed – subduing by His Word, Spirit and discipline His people's corruptions."

Needless to say, such "governors" include also **covenant parents**. See the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, QQ. & AA. 124-27. For such 'governing parents' subdue the corruptions of Christ's little people, their own children, by His Word and discipline – especially by means of daily family worship.

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This, continues the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, is among those matters required by "the Moral Law...to the world's end... Matthew 5:16-20." Believers are also required "to grow in the **daily** exercise thereof." Thus: "Second Peter 1:5-8... Brotherly kindness...keepeth estimation of...all the **household** of faith."

Accordingly, the *Sum* finally closes with a most serious injunction. "Hence, let every watchful believer, for strengthening himself in faith and obedience, reason after this manner:

"Whosoever doth **daily** employ Christ Jesus for cleansing his conscience and affections from the guiltiness and filthiness of sins against the Law and for enabling him to give obedience to the Law in love – he hath the evidence of true faith in himself... But to employ Christ Jesus **daily** for cleansing of my conscience and affections from the guiltiness and filthiness of sins against the Law, and for enabling me to give obedience to the Law in love, is necessary for evidencing of true faith in me. Therefore, this I must study to do – except I would deceive myself and perish!"

Jesus Himself put it much more succinctly. He enjoined His disciples and their families: "You must pray like this – 'Our heavenly Father! ... Give us **today** our **daily** bread; and do keep on forgiving us our debts, as we keep on forgiving our debtors....

"For if you keep on forgiving men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also keep on forgiving you. But if you do not keep on forgiving men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'" Daily! Matthew 6:9-15.

* * * * *

Now all of the above Puritan Standards – and specifically "the *Confession of Faith*, the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*..., the covenants *National and Solemn League*," and the "*Directories for Publick and Family Worship*" together "with the Acts of Assembly and Parliament relative to and approbative of the same" – were soon thereafter published together, by the Church of Scotland.

They appeared under this heading: "Deuteronomy 6:6-7 – 'And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up!'"⁵²⁶

⁵²⁶ *Ib.*, p. 1.

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Indeed, shortly after this, several of the Westminster divines themselves (Dr. Henry Wilkinson and Thomas Goodwin and John Jackson) – together with several other famous contemporary Puritans (such as Thomas Gouge, Charles Offspring, Matthew Pool, Ralph Venning, Thomas Manton, Thomas Watson and Obadiah Lee *etc.*) – wrote their famous *Address to the Christian Reader (Especially Heads of Families)*.⁵²⁷ There, they advocated the regular use of the above documents at the nation's family altars.

Stated that *Address*:⁵²⁸ "Among several other sins...we cannot but esteem the disuse of family instruction [as] one of the greatest....

"How much the serious endeavours of godly parents...might contribute to an early seasoning [of] the tender years of such as are under their inspection, is abundantly evident.... It were easy to set before you a cloud of witnesses, the language of whose practice hath been not only an eminent commendation of this duty, but also a serious exhortation to it."

Such a "cloud of witnesses" – continued the *Address* – would include "Abel [who], though dead, yet speaks' by his example to us for imitation of his faith.... Hebrews 11:4 [*cf.* Genesis 4:4]. So do the examples of Abraham [Genesis 18:19]; of Joshua [24:15]"; and "of the parents of Solomon." Second Samuel 6:18-20; 7:8-15; 12:15-24; First Kings 3:6-14; First Chronicles 29:1-5,19,23f; Psalm 55:17; 72:1f; 101:1f; 118:15; 127:1f; 128:1-6; & 133:1.

The same is true, continued the *Address*, "of the grandmother and mother of Timothy" – Second Timothy 1:5 and 3:14f – as well as of "the mother of Augustine." *Confessions* 1:6:7 & II:3:16f & III:11:19f & IX:9:19f – compare his *Gift of Perseverance* chapter 20."

In all these cases, the parents' "care was as well to nurse up the souls as the bodies of their little ones.... As their pains herein was great – so was their success no way unanswerable.

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"We should scarce imagine it any better than an impertinency, in this [Puritan] noon-day of the Gospel, either to inform or persuade in a duty: so expressly commanded; so frequently urged; so highly encouraged; and so eminently owned by the Lord – in all ages, with His blessing.... The restoring of this duty to its due observance, give[s] us leave to suggest this [following] double advice.

⁵²⁷ *Ib.*, p. 3.

⁵²⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 3-6.

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"The 'first' [advice] concerns heads of families in respect of themselves – that, as the Lord hath set them in place above the rest of their family, they would labour in all wisdom and spiritual understanding to be above them also.... How unmeet are they to instruct others, who need themselves to be taught 'which be the first principles of the Oracles of God.' Hebrews 5:12.... 'Without knowledge, the mind cannot be good.' Proverbs 19:2.... 'My people are destroyed, for lack of knowledge.' Hosea 4:6....

"Our 'second' advice, concerns the heads of families – in respect of their families.... Whatever hath been said already...upon a double account...concerns parents...as having themselves and others to look after. Some [parents] there are who, because of their ignorance, cannot; others, because of their sluggishness, will not [or do not want to] – mind this duty.

"To the former, we propound the method of Joshua – who first began with himself [Joshua 1:7f], and then is careful of his family [Joshua 8:34f *cf.* 24:15]. To the latter, we shall only hint what a dreadful meeting those parents and masters must have at that Great Day, with their children..., when all that were under their inspection shall not only accuse them but [also] charge their eternal miscarrying upon their score.

"Every age of the Gospel – hath its Creeds, Confessions, Catechisms.... Such breviaries and models of divinity...have been singularly useful. Such forms of sound words...have been in use in the Church ever since God Himself wrote the Decalogue as a summary of things to be done. And Christ taught us that [Lord's] Prayer of His, as a Directory [of] what to ask.

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"Concerning the usefulness of such compendiary systems, so much hath been said already by a learned divine [the Westminster Assembly theologian Rev. Dr. Anthony Tuckney of Boston, England, in his *Sermon on Second Timothy 1:13*] – as is sufficient to satisfy all who are not resolved to remain unsatisfied.

"It is no small advantage the reader [of the *Westminster Standards*] now hath, by the addition of Scriptures at large, whereby with little pains he may more profit.... With every truth, he may behold its Scripture foundation....

"There is no intelligent person but will conclude [to] that advice of the prophet especially suited to an age such as this – Isaiah 8:20. 'To the Law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this Word – it is because there is no light in them'....

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"The reverend and learned composers of these ensuing treatises [the *Westminster Standards*] were willing to take the pains of annexing Scripture proofs to every truth – [so] that the faith of people might not be built upon the dictates of men but [upon] the authority of God.... The advantages you see in this design, are many and great. The way to spiritual knowledge is hereby made more easy; and the ignorance of this age more inexcusable.

"If, therefore, there be any spark in you of love to God – be not content that any of yours [in your own families] should be ignorant of Him Whom you so much admire! ... If there be any compassion to the souls of them who are under your care; if any regard of your being found faithful in the Day of Christ; if any respect to future generations – labour to sow these seeds of knowledge which may grow up in after times!"

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One of the Puritan signatories to the above *Address*, was the great theologian Rev. Dr. Thomas Manton (1620-77). During the days of England's Commonwealth, he was Oliver Cromwell's Chaplain – and rendered the prayer at the Lord Protector's installation in 1659.

It was also Manton, who welcomed back Charles II at the Restoration in 1660. Indeed, Manton was even a leading participant during the 1661 Savoy Conference – to perfect the *Confession of Faith* for the Independents. Perhaps most influential of all, however, was Manton's famous *Epistle to the Reader* of the *Westminster Standards*. There, he urged the erection of family altars throughout the land.

Declared Manton:⁵²⁹ "It is bad parents...that make bad children.... We cannot blame so much their untowardness, as our own negligence in their education. The devil hath a great spite at the Kingdom of Christ, and he knoweth no such compendious way to crush it...as by...supplanting family duties....

"Religion was first hatched in families, and there the devil seeketh to crush it... When Cain went out from Adam's family, he is said to go out from the face of the Lord. Genesis 4:16.... The devil knoweth that this is a blow at the root.... If he can subvert families, other societies and communities will not long flourish.... For there is the stock from whence they are supplied, both for the present and future.

"For the present. A family is the seminary of Church and State.... There is the first making or marring – and the presage of their future lives to be thence taken.

⁵²⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 7-9.

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Proverbs 20:11. By family discipline, officers are trained up for the Church. First Timothy 3:4, 'one that ruleth well his own house' &c.... It is noted, Acts 21:5, that the disciples brought Paul on his way – with their wives and children....

"For the future. It is comfortable, certainly, to see a thriving nursery of young plants.... Psalm 102:28, 'the children of Thy servants shall continue'.... How careful should ministers and parents be to train up young ones whilst they are yet pliable...in the knowledge and fear of God; and betimes to instil the principles of our most holy faith, as they are drawn into a short sum in catechism and so altogether laid in the view of conscience! ... I had upon entreaty resolved to recommend to thee with the greatest earnestness – the work of catechising."

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Continued Manton: "Families are societies that must be sanctified to God – as well as churches.... But, while negligent ministers are (deservedly) cast out of their places – the negligent masters of families take themselves to be almost blameless. They offer their children to God in baptism, and there they promise to teach them the doctrine of the Gospel and bring them up in the nurture of the Lord.

"But they easily promise – and easily break it, and educate their children for the world and the flesh.... This covenant-breaking with God and betraying the souls of their children to the devil, must lie heavy on them here or hereafter!

"What it is to bring up a child for God, and govern a family as a sanctified society! O, how sweetly and successfully would the work of God go on – if we would but all join together in our several places to promote it! Men need not then run, without sending, to be preachers....

"Especially women should be careful of this duty.... As they are most about their children, and have early and frequent opportunities to instruct them – so this is the principal service they can do to God in this World, being restrained from more publick work.... Many an excellent magistrate hath been sent into the Commonwealth...and many a precious saint to Heaven, through the happy preparations of a holy education perhaps by a woman....

"Would parents but begin betimes, and labour to affect the hearts of their children with the great matters of everlasting life! ... Then, one pastor need not be put to do the work of two or three hundred or thousand governors of families – even to teach their children those principles which they should have taught them long before.... Nor should we have need to shut out so many from Holy Communion upon the account of ignorance.... We should entreat all Christian

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families to take more pains in this necessary work, and to get better acquainted with the substance of Christianity....

"I know not what work should be fitter for their use, than that compiled by the Assembly at Westminster – a Synod of as godly, judicious divines...I verily think, as England ever saw.... If in the days of old, when councils were in power and account, they had had but such a council of bishops as this of presbyters was – the fame of it for learning and holiness, and all ministerial abilities would, with very great honour, have been transmitted to posterity.

"I do therefore desire that all masters of families would first study well this work themselves, and then teach it their children.... First let them read and learn the *Shorter Catechism*; and next, the *Larger*; and lastly, read the *Confession of Faith*!"

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In 1647, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland apparently much regretted the transgression of: the implicit requirements anent family worship of the Westminster Assembly's 1643f *Solemn League and Covenant* between the Churches and Parliaments of Scotland and Britain (alias England and Wales); and the explicit requirements anent family worship stated in the Westminster Assembly's 1645 *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. For, on August 24th 1647, the Church of Scotland enacted the observance of its own 1647 *Directory for Family Worship* (as seen earlier above).

Moreover, in the following year, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as well as the Estates of the Scottish Parliament both approved of the 1648 *Solemn Acknowledgment of Publick Sins and Breaches of the Covenant*. There, they not only renewed the Westminster Assembly's 1643f *Solemn League and Covenant*. They also lamented⁵³⁰ that "the greatest part of masters of families – amongst noblemen, barons, gentlemen, burgesses and commons – neglect to seek God in their families.... Few of our nobles and great ones, ever to this day, could be persuaded to perform family duties themselves and in their own persons."

⁵³⁰ *Ib.*, pp. 283f.

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On the other hand, by way of urgent reformation, the *Acknowledgment* then continues: "We do resolve and solemnly engage ourselves before the Lord, carefully to avoid...all these offences..., and testify the integrity of our resolution herein...that we may be the better enabled in the power of the Lord's strength to perform the same."

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In passing, we would again draw attention to what we have previously said, in earlier chapters, about the views anent daily family worship held in the middle of the seventeenth century by the Puritan Rev. Dr. John Owen – perhaps the greatest British theologian of all time. He was the son of a godly vicar and a pious mother,⁵³¹ who doubtless raised him with daily family worship.

John Owen himself had eleven children, all of whom but one died in early youth.⁵³² It is significant that when Lady Hartopp lost her own baby daughter, Owen – like King David – could assure her also from his own experience:⁵³³ "Your dear infant is in the eternal enjoyment of the fruits of all our prayers. For the covenant of God is ordered in all things, and sure. We shall go to her; she shall not return to us!" Compare: Second Samuel 12:15-24.

Owen's above-mentioned optimism anent the salvation of the early-dying children of true believers was rooted not only in the promises of the covenant of grace, and in Scripture. It was rooted also in the abiding aspects of the covenant of works, and in nature.

Thus, he insisted⁵³⁴ that "it is common to man with other creatures to take care for the nourishing of his children – of the young [and] helpless ones that receive their being by him. There is implanted in him, in the principles of his nature [and] concreated with them – a love and care for them.... There is an instinct...of nature in children to yield obedience to their parents.... There is, it is true, in children an impress of the power of the law of nature – suiting them to obedience."⁵³⁵

Indeed, there are not only specifically-Christian duties. For there are also "duties to be performed by virtue of our general vocation. Such are the duties of parents and masters of families.... The families that call not on the Name of the Lord – are under His curse." Jeremiah 10:25.

⁵³¹ *Works of John Owen*, I pp. xxii *seqq.*

⁵³² *Ib.*, p. xcvi.

⁵³³ *Ib.*, p. cxvi.

⁵³⁴ *Ib.*, IV p. 304.

⁵³⁵ *Ib.*, XI p. 477.

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Consequently, all families – and precisely as families – should indeed call upon God's Name in family prayer. Declared John Owen: "This be their duty!"⁵³⁶

On the title page of his *Two Short Catechisms*,⁵³⁷ Owen cited Psalm 34:11. His quotation reads: "Come you children, listen unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord!"

Owen also cited, in the very first question and answer of his *Short Catechism*,⁵³⁸ family worship passages like Genesis 18:19 and Deuteronomy 6:18 [compare verses 6-9] specifically with reference to 'the nature of man' before the fall. This clearly shows Owen's implicit endorsement of the real need for domestic household devotions in the home also of the unfallen Adam and, by implication, in the homes even of all his descendants ever since.

Elsewhere, Owen noted⁵³⁹ that "the paternal teaching and instruction of families in things which appertain to God, being a duty of the law of nature, remained in its full vigour and was not at all impaired by the [later] institution of a new order to teachers for assemblies, beyond domestical.... Neither, without doubt, ought it to cease amongst Christians – there being no other reason why now it should....

"The people of God were...enjoined also to read the Scriptures...upon all occasions, in their own houses and elsewhere; to talk of them, or communicate their knowledge in them, unto others."

Hence, continued Owen,⁵⁴⁰ "this is the will of God: that in assemblies of His appointment, as churches and families..., one should pray in the Name of Himself – and [also on behalf of] the rest that join with him."

* * * * *

Owen's great multi-volume *Exposition of Hebrews* presupposed all of the above. For there, he further stated⁵⁴¹ that "as persons were united into any community...worship was required of them.... This is a prescription of the law of nature.... Especially is it so with respect to that which is the foundation of all others, in a household or family.

⁵³⁶ *Ib.*, IV p. 313.

⁵³⁷ *Ib.*, I p. 463.

⁵³⁸ *Ib.*, XV p. 447.

⁵³⁹ *Ib.*, XIII pp. 14f.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ib.*, IV p. 302.

⁵⁴¹ *Ib.*, XVIII (II) pp. 239f & 245.

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"So God gives unto Abraham the testimony of sincerity, that he would order and take care of His worship in his family. Genesis 18:19.... There were sacrifices peculiar unto families....

"So Job offered burnt-offerings for himself and his family, chapter 1:5; and Jacob for his, Genesis 35:3-7.... Persons were united into families.... The *pater familias* [or the 'father of the family' or 'head of the household'] had the duty of sacrificing for the whole [family] committed unto him."

From Exodus 2:2-10f, we learn that a godly Levite's wife conceived, and later bore him a son. She then protected her baby for three months, before being forced – under persecution – to let him go. He was promptly claimed by the daughter of the pagan Pharaoh, who named him: 'Moses.'

She then, without knowing who it was, hired the baby's true mother to nurse him. After Moses had grown, his godly mother brought him to Pharaoh's daughter – who then raised him further as her own legal child.

From Hebrews 11:23-25, it is clear that the godly parents of Moses did an excellent job in training him in their own true religion, not only throughout his fetushood but also throughout the first three months of his post-natal life in their home – and, by implication, also later, before he was removed therefrom permanently. Only thereafter was Moses further raised in the pagan palace of the King of Egypt and his family.

Before the latter event, Moses was thus exposed to the daily influences of a godly home. So 'by faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to keep on being called the son of Pharaoh's daughter – choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.'

On this, John Owen commented:⁵⁴² "It is a blessed thing to have the principles of true religion fixed in the minds of children, and their affections engaged unto them, before they are exposed.... The negligence of most parents herein, who have none of those difficulties in the discharge of their duty which the parents of Moses had to conflict withal, is a treachery which they must be accountable for!"

* * * * *

In light of the *Westminster Standards* and the contemporaneous *Directory for Family Worship* and the *Sum of Saving Knowledge* of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, we can surely draw the right conclusion. The British Puritans were strongly committed to daily family worship.

⁵⁴² *Ib.*, XXIII (VII) p. 146.

VIII – DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP FROM A LASCO TO THE PURITANS

Their morning household devotions were characterized by praise – and also by petitions for the guidance of God in the affairs of that day. Their evening household devotions were marked by confession of sins – and also by their giving of thanks for the mercies of God's grace received during the events of the day.

Daniel Cawdrey was himself raised with daily family worship. He filled a vacancy at the Westminster Assembly, and wrote his 1656 *Family Reformation Promoted* as a practical manual on family religion. There, he chose to employ somewhat of a catechetical style. He argued⁵⁴³ that the Christian "chief householder" functions "in Christ's stead to his family" – and occupies the offices of prophet and priest and king, as he instructs and prays for and with and rules over his family.

Finally, the godly Rev. Richard Baxter wrote his *Christian Directory* as a manual of pastoral care in 1664f. It was published in 1673, when a large part of it was devoted to the family – under the title of 'Christian Economics.' It was doubtless the Greek New Testament's word *oikonomos*, meaning the manager of a household, which suggested this title.

There, Baxter declared:⁵⁴⁴ "It is the will of God that the rulers of families should teach those that are under them...the doctrine of God concerning salvation; and the terms on which it is to be had; and the means to be used for attaining it; and all duties requisite on our parts."

Prayer and praise are "of divine appointment": as parts of family worship which need to accompany the reading from and meditation upon the Word of God. This needs to be done twice daily, namely in the morning and at evening.

Baxter also gave many 'Directions.' In Direction V, he declared: "The husband is to excel the wife in knowledge and be her teacher in the matters that belong to her salvation. He must instruct her in the Word of God, and direct her in particular duties.... He is to open to her at home the things which she understood not in the congregation. First Corinthians 14:35."

In Direction VI, Baxter declared: "The husband must be the principal teacher of the family. He must instruct them, and examine them, and rule them about the matters of God as well as his own service – and see that the Lord's Day and worship be observed by all that are within his gates."

⁵⁴³ In *Napthali Press Anthology*, Dallas, 1991, No. 4, pp. 58f. See too at nn. 496f above.

⁵⁴⁴ Ligonier Pa.: *Soli Deo Gloria*, Vol. I, pp. 414f & 421.

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In Direction VII, he declared: "The husband is to be the mouth of the family, in their daily conjunct prayers unto God. Therefore he must be able to pray, and also have a praying heart. He must be as it were the priest of the household; and therefore should be the most holy, that he may be fit to stand between them and God, and to offer up prayers to Him."

* * * * *

Summarizing, we see that daily family worship thus thrived: in the Polish Calvinist A Lasco; in the German Reformed *Heidelberg Catechism*; and in the *Dutch Reformed Standards* (such as the *Baptismal Formula*, the *Marriage Formula*, the *Household Prayers*, the *Short Compendium*, and the *Decrees of Dordt*).

It thrived also in Knox's 1556 *Letter of Wholesome Counsel* and in the 1560 *First Book of Discipline* of the Reformed Church in Scotland – as well as in the decisions of the early Scottish Presbyterian General Assemblies.

Daily household devotions were also commended in the English Westminster Assembly's *Confession of Faith*, its *Larger Catechism*, its *Shorter Catechism*, and its *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. They were implied also in the contemporaneous Church of Scotland's *Sum of Saving Knowledge* – and, of course, especially in its *Directory for Family Worship*. Indeed, the widespread omission of household devotions was specifically repented of – in the Scottish 1648 *Solemn Acknowledgment of Publick Sins and Breaches of the Covenant*.

All of the *Westminster Standards* were commended "to the Christian Reader (especially Heads of Families)" in an *Address* written by some of the Westminster divines and many of their Puritan contemporaries. Indeed, they were commended also by the contemporary Puritan Thomas Manton in his own *Epistle to the Reader* of the *Westminster Standards* – as well as by other contemporary Puritans such as William Gouge, Robert Cawdrey, Daniel Cawdrey, John Owen, and Richard Baxter.

Truly, in Calvinistic Puritanism household devotions came into their own. No other period of church history since the apostolic age ever practised daily family worship, morning and evening, with such blessed results.

IX

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP WITH MATTHEW HENRY

What is by far the most widely-read *Bible Commentary* ever published? We do not hesitate to say it is without doubt that of perhaps the most famous of all of the Puritans – Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry (1662-1714).

The famous Anglican scholar Rev. William Romaine⁵⁴⁵ pointed out at the front of the fifth edition thereof, in his own 1761 *Recommendation to the Public*: "There is no Comment[ary] upon the Bible, either ancient or modern, in all respects equal to Mr. Henry's." The famous American, Rev. Professor Dr. Wilbur M. Smith, called it:⁵⁴⁶ "The greatest devotional commentary ever written."

Rev. Dr. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the greatest Baptist Preacher of all time, insisted:⁵⁴⁷ "Every Minister ought to read through Matthew Henry, entirely and carefully." In his own sermon on Philemon 2, in his *Treasury of the New Testament*, Spurgeon made the following relevant remarks:⁵⁴⁸

"Family prayer in our old Puritan households was a matter of very great importance. Let me tell you what Philip Henry used to do. He was a [Presbyterian] Minister.... He went through the whole Bible in course, expounding it chapter by chapter, and accompanying it by prayer and singing.... He said that the sound of singing, at family prayers, was a distinct confession that that family loved and worshipped God....

"He called his children together...and catechized them upon the [*Westminster*] *General Assembly's [Shorter] Catechism*.... That good man's son, Mr. Matthew Henry, wrote his famous *Commentary* from the notes which he took of his father's expositions at morning and evening prayer....

"That family of Mr. Henry, to which I have referred, was so well-ordered that, very often, visitors to the house – who were unconverted when they went there – were converted during their visit.

⁵⁴⁵ See 'Preface to the Historical Books' in M. Henry's *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, London: Marshall Bros., n.d., I p. viii.

⁵⁴⁶ See front and back outside dustcovers of ed. L.F. Church's *Matthew Henry's Commentary* (abridged), Basingstoke: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1960.

⁵⁴⁷ Cited in *Publisher's Note* of Church's *op. cit.*, I p. v.

⁵⁴⁸ See too in our text at nn. 240 & 240 above.

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"Remember what Matthew Henry says: 'They who pray in the family, do well; they who read and pray, do better; but they who sing, and read, and pray – do best of all.'" Thus Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

* * * * *

In January 1992, our own article *The Covenantal Home Life of Matthew Henry* was published in the *British Reformed Journal*.⁵⁴⁹ For the next several pages here below, there follows the gist of that article.

The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* had been completed not even two decades earlier. The Stuart monarchy had been restored. Presbyterians were being persecuted. Then Matthew Henry was born – in 1662.

Philip Henry (1631-96), born in London of Welsh parents, was a well-known Presbyterian Minister. His son Matthew first saw the light of day just after his father had been ejected from his manse under the new and infamous *Act of Uniformity*.

The infant was thus able to be baptized – but solely by an Anglican Rector, and indeed without the additional Anglican 'benefit' of Anglican 'godfathers.' Only later was that *Act of Uniformity* to be relaxed.

Nevertheless, the thus-baptized Matthew was thereafter still given a thoroughly Calvinistic upbringing by his godly parents – who held family worship in their home every morning and evening. So, even when only three years old, Matthew could read the Bible both distinctly and observantly.⁵⁵⁰

Of that covenantal rearing by his Christian parents, Matthew himself later testified on his twentieth birthday – in his memorial entitled *Mercies Received*. There,⁵⁵¹ Matthew thanked God "that I have been born in a place and time of gospel light.... I had a religious education. The principles of religion [were] instilled into me with my very milk, and from a child...[I was] taught the knowledge of God.... I was in infancy brought within the pale of the Visible Church in my baptism....

⁵⁴⁹ 9 Church Rd., Thornbury, Bristol, England, pp. 3-9.

⁵⁵⁰ See J.B. Williams: *Memoirs of the Life, Character and Writings of the Rev. Matthew Henry* (in *Henry's Commentary*, I pp. 3f).

⁵⁵¹ *Ib.*, pp. 9f.

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"I have had the Scriptures, and means for understanding them, by daily expositions.... I am blessed with such parents as few have, and sisters also that I have reason to rejoice in.... All these mercies are but the earnest of more, and pledges of better – in the Kingdom of Glory.... Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ, the Fountain and Foundation of all my mercies. Amen, hallelujah!"

* * * * *

Here follows a description of Philip Henry's family worship practice, with which Matthew grew up. According to Rev. Professor Dr. J.W. Alexander's own book *Thoughts on Family Worship*, Philip Henry's conduct of daily household devotions was very thorough.

Explained Alexander⁵⁵² of Philip Henry: "He advised the reading of the Scripture in order. For though one star in the firmament of the Scripture differs from another star in glory, yet wherever God hath a mouth to speak – we should have an ear to hear...

"The diligent searcher may find much excellent matter in those parts of Scripture which we are sometimes tempted to think might have been spared. How affectionately would he sometimes bless God for every book, and chapter, and verse, and line, in the Bible!

"What he read in his family, he always expounded – and exhorted all Ministers to do so, as an excellent means of increasing their acquaintance with the Scriptures. His expositions were not so much critical as plain and practical and useful, and such as tended to edification and to answer the end for which the Scriptures were written – which is to make us wise unto salvation.

"And herein he had a peculiar excellence, performing that daily exercise with so much judgment and at the same time with such facility and clearness – as if every exposition had been premeditated.... Very instructive they were, as well as affecting to the auditors [or listeners].

⁵⁵²Harrisonburg Va.: Sprinkle, 1991 ed., pp. 207-11.

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"He often admired that saying of Tertullian's – 'I adore the fulness of the Scriptures! – and sometimes [said] that *Scriptura semper habet aliquid relegendibus* [or 'Scripture always has something for its re-readers']. When sometimes he had hit upon some useful observation that was new to him, he would say afterwards to those about him – 'How often have I read this chapter, and never before now took notice of such a thing in it!' He put his children, while they were with him, to write these expositions; and when they were gone from him, the strangers that sojourned with him did the same."

* * * * *

When twenty-two, his son Matthew became a law student at Gray's Inn in London. There, he studied Littleton and Coke and Lambard.⁵⁵³ Then, when twenty-five, after being ordained as a Presbyterian Minister,⁵⁵⁴ he married a Puritan (Miss Katherine Hardware). She later died, in childbirth, from smallpox.

Very shortly thereafter, Matthew's father – Rev. Philip Henry – came and baptized his surviving infant granddaughter (also named Katherine). Explained the bereaved Matthew on that occasion: "According to the tenor of this covenant, I offer up this my child to the Great God!"⁵⁵⁵

When twenty-eight, the widower Matthew married the Puritan, Mary Warburton (the daughter of a godly judge). The following year, their daughter Elizabeth was born. Once again, Matthew's father Philip performed the baptism, preaching from Isaiah 43:10 – 'you are My witnesses.' All the covenant families present at that baptism, were indeed God's witnesses – and without 'benefit' of Anglican godparents!

However, Elizabeth died but fourteen weeks after her birth. Wrote Matthew Henry⁵⁵⁶ then of Elizabeth: "I am much comforted from her baptism. I desire to leave her in the arms of Him Who gave her to me. The will of the Lord be done!

"I had said – if the Lord will spare her, I will endeavour to bring her up for Him... God is wise, and righteous, and faithful. Even this also is not only consistent with, but flowing from – covenant love... Blessed be God for the covenant of grace with me and mine!

"I am much refreshed with Second Kings 4:26 [the words of Elisha to the great woman of Shunem whose child had just died]: 'Is it well with you; is it well with

⁵⁵³ Henry's *Commentary*, I pp. 10-13f.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 17-27.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ib.*, 29f.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ib.*, p. 31.

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your husband; is it well with your child?' And she said, 'It is well!' When I part with so dear a child, yet have I no reason to say otherwise but that it is well with *us* – and with the child. For all is well that God does."

When Matthew was thirty-one, his daughter Mary was born. She was baptized, together with her cousin, by their grandfather Rev. Philip Henry. His sermon was from Genesis 35:5 – 'Esau asked [Jacob], "Who are those with you?" And he [Jacob] said, "The children which God has graciously given your servant!'"

In his sermon, Philip observed what a religious answer Jacob gave to a common question. Then he went on to insist that covenant children are the *gracious* gifts of a *covenant-keeping* God.⁵⁵⁷

Yet Philip did not baptize all of his grandchildren. For his son, Matthew, himself baptized most of his own babies. On those occasions, he preached on the Scriptural authority of infant baptism, explaining the advantages of the sacrament to both those little ones and their parents.⁵⁵⁸ He likened infant baptism to taking a beneficial lease for a child while in the cradle, and putting his life into it.⁵⁵⁹

In his own *Treatise on Baptism*, Matthew Henry declared:⁵⁶⁰ "I cannot but take occasion to express my gratitude to God for *my* infant baptism.... It was an early admission into the visible body of Christ.... It furnished my pious parents with a good argument...for an early dedication of my own self to God in my childhood.... God has wrought...good work upon my soul.... I desire, with humble thankfulness, to acknowledge the moral influence of my infant baptism upon it."

* * * * *

To Matthew Henry, every Christian household should practise covenantal daily family worship. He conducted it in his own home, and urged his acquaintances to do the same in theirs. Matthew himself had ten children: Katherine, Elizabeth, Mary I, Esther, Ann, Philip, Elizabeth II, Sarah, Theodosia, and Mary II. Only some survived infancy, but none lacked daily family worship from their conceptions onward. Deuteronomy 6:4-13; First Corinthians 7:14; Second Timothy 1:3-6 and 3:14-17.

⁵⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁵⁸ *Ib.*, p. 62.

⁵⁵⁹ M. Henry: *The Life of Philip Henry by his Son the Rev. Matthew Henry*, 1825 ed., p. 85.

⁵⁶⁰ 1783 ed., p. 118.

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Wrote Matthew Henry's biographer J.B. Williams:⁵⁶¹ "His whole conduct to his offspring was marked by kindness. The advice he gave to others, he acted upon himself. 'Do all you can to make your children love home!'....

"Continual chiding and finding fault, he abhorred. 'Remember,' he would say [to others], 'children are *but* children! If parents would not correct them except in a praying frame when they can lift their hands without wrath – it would provoke neither God nor them!'" First Timothy 2:8 and Colossians 3:21.

J.B. Williams further explained that in Matthew Henry's sermon *Christ's Favour to Children*,⁵⁶² he "placed parental obligations in a strong and affecting light – directed with happy precision in the performance of essential duties." Matthew Henry "imparted instructions at all times suited to the young." He "so ministered advice and encouragement to those that have their superintendence – as to indicate with equal perspicuity the soundness of his principles.... Such remarks are no less applicable to the directions to parents, contained in his *Treatise on Baptism*."⁵⁶³

Matthew Henry, just like his father Philip, gave daily Christian education to his children. Remarkd Matthew:⁵⁶⁴ "I know you cannot give them *grace*. That is God's gift. But *duty* is required. Children must be *nursed* for God, and our care should be that they may be *pious*."

His biographer J.B. Williams graphically described the daily "domestic worship" in Matthew's home. "Henry reverently imitated the constancy and punctuality of his father. Like that illustrious saint [his father Philip] so often mentioned, he [Matthew] assembled his family – whatever happened, and whoever were under his roof – as early in the morning as circumstances would admit."

In addition, added Williams, Matthew Henry re-assembled his family "in like manner, also every evening." For, in Henry's own words, he was 'ashamed to put God off with drowsy devotions.' Thus again Williams.

"He[nry] was comprehensive; but neither tedious nor hurried. The exercise commenced – by invocation in a few words of the Ineffable Name, for aid and acceptance. He then read, in the morning, a portion of the *Old* Testament Scripture, in regular course; and in the evening, with like regularity, a portion of the *New*. Unless the chapter was short, he divided it into sections – confining

⁵⁶¹ *Op. cit.* 79.

⁵⁶² M. Henry: *Miscellaneous Works*, 1726 ed., p. 702.

⁵⁶³ See the duod. 1783 ed., p. 218.

⁵⁶⁴ Original manuscript – *cf.* Williams's *op cit.*, p. 80.

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himself generally to eight or ten verses, of which he gave a brief and edifying explanation.

"After the exposition, some part of a psalm was sung. Everyone had a book... 'How the houses of the good old Protestants were perfumed with this incense daily'" – wrote Henry – "'we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us!'"

"Prayer succeeded singing. The whole was usually comprehended within the space of half an hour or a little more. When prayer was over, his children received his blessing – which he pronounced with great seriousness, solemnity, and affection. The better to engage the attention of his family, he required from them – at the close of the exercise – an *account!*"

Henry's daily family worship was the gate of Heaven, toward which he conducted his children. That gate lay between their covenantal conception (as sealed by their subsequent infant baptism) and their later public yet personal profession of faith (when admitted to the Lord's Supper on reaching adolescence). Exodus 12:26f & Proverbs 22:6 & Luke 2:40-49 *cf.* First Corinthians 7:14; 10:1-4; 11:27f; 12:13f.

* * * * *

In his catechizings, Matthew Henry proceeded from the Westminster Assembly's *Shorter Catechism* and its *Larger Catechism*. He grouped the answers into several other propositions. He then explained the latter; supported them with Biblical proof-texts; and supplied practical inferences.

All of this, Henry developed into a series of writings. First appeared his 1695 *Family Hymns gathered (mostly) out of the Best Translations of David's Psalms*.⁵⁶⁵ This was followed by his work *A Scripture Catechism in the Method of the Assemblies* (1702). Next, he published his 1703 *Plain Catechism for Children*. Then, in 1704, there appeared his famous sermon *A Church in the House...concerning Family Religion*.⁵⁶⁶

In that latter work, Henry stated:⁵⁶⁷ "All agree that masters of families who profess religion and the fear of God themselves, should – according to the talents they are intrusted with – maintain and keep up religion and the fear of God in their families...."

⁵⁶⁵ London: Th. Parkhurst, 1695.

⁵⁶⁶ Williams's *op. cit.*, pp. 63 & 106.

⁵⁶⁷ In his *Complete Works*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978 ed., pp. 249-51.

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"Masters of families who preside in the other affairs of the house, must go before their households in the things of God. They must be prophets, priests and kings in their own families.... As such they must keep up family-doctrine, family-worship, and family-discipline. Then is there a church in the house... That is the family religion I am persuading you to!"

* * * * *

In 1711 appeared his volume *The Holy Seed*, on the subject of praying youth.⁵⁶⁸ Here, Henry's own 'Preface' expressed his concern for the welfare of the young – that they may be a seed to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 22:9f; 22:30; Isaiah 52:15; 53:10; 54:3; 59:21.

1712 saw the publication of Henry's *Directions for Beginning, Spending and Closing Each Day with God*. His writings *Christ's Favour to Children* and *On the Catechising of Youth and Sobermindedness Recommended to the Young* all appeared in 1713. Then, after his death in 1714 at the age of but fifty-one, there appeared posthumously his work on *The Pleasantness of a Religious Life*.⁵⁶⁹

As Henry's biographer J.B. Williams rightly concluded in his own *Memoirs of the Life, Character and Writings of the Rev. Matthew Henry*: "His piety at home embraced the whole compass of relative [alias relational] religion. He was an example to believers – not only as a husband, a father and a master; but also as a son, a son-in-law, a brother, and a friend."⁵⁷⁰

* * * * *

Important in this regard is Hughes Olipant Old's own 1978 writing *The Reformed Daily Office: a Puritan Perspective*. For there, H.O. Old stated⁵⁷¹ of Matthew Henry's daily family worship that especially the morning should be the time of praise.

Henry himself commented:⁵⁷² "Every day we have reason to bless Him. For every day He is blessing us.... Therefore, as He is giving out to us the fruits of His favour which are said to be 'new every morning' [Lamentations 3:23]..., so we should be still returning the expression of our gratitude to Him – and other

⁵⁶⁸ See Williams's *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁵⁶⁹ See p. vii of Henry's 'Preface to the Historical Books' in Vol. I of the Marshall Brothers' ed. of his *Commentary on the Holy Bible*.

⁵⁷⁰ Williams: *Memoirs*, p. 81.

⁵⁷¹ In *Reformed Liturgy and Music* 12:4 (1978), pp. 9-18.

⁵⁷² As cited in Old: *op. cit.*, pp. 15f.

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pious and devout affections – which, like fire on the altar, must be new every morning!"

H.O. Old explained⁵⁷³ of the views of Matthew Henry: "The morning is a time to take notice of the bounty of God's gifts – to observe how 'the heavens declare the glory of God' [Psalm 19:1]. It is a time to remember the story of creation [Genesis 1 & Psalm 104]; the promise God gave to Noah [Genesis 6:18 & 8:21 to 9:17]; and the covenant with the day and the night [Jeremiah 31:31-35 & 33:20-25]....

"Henry reminds us of how Job rose up early in the morning to make sacrifices for his children. In the morning, prayer should be made for our families, remembering each person by name." Thus: praise and petition for God's guidance.

At the family's evening worship, Henry placed a triune stress upon the daily household devotions. There, he emphasized: thanksgivings to God for His daily mercies; confession of sins committed during the day; and humble supplication of God's grace for the night. Thus H.O. Old.⁵⁷⁴

* * * * *

The Methodist Rev. Dr. Leslie F. Church (Ph.D. and F.R.H.S.), in his own 1960 edition and abridgment thereof, rightly observed⁵⁷⁵ that "the *Commentary on the Bible* by Matthew Henry is the outcome of personal and pastoral experience. At family worship in his father's home, and later at daily prayers with his own family and in the homes of his neighbours, he not only studied the Scriptures but learned how best to apply them to the lives and needs of people young and old....

"The beauty of his home life...was moulded on the pattern of...his father's house...as 'a house of God and a gate of Heaven'.... Henry conducted family prayers in his home at the beginning and the end of the day.

"In the morning he expounded the Old Testament, and in the evening the New.... These expositions, amended as the result of questions and comments from his family and his neighbours, were the basis of his *Commentary*."

⁵⁷³ *Id.*

⁵⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 16f.

⁵⁷⁵ L.F. Church: *op. cit. (Foreword)*, pp. vii-viii.

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Let us now look at certain passages in that *Commentary* of Matthew Henry. After so doing, any impartial reader will certainly conclude that it is a mine of information – especially as regards the important matter of daily family worship.

* * * * *

In Genesis 4:1, Eve conceived, gave birth to a baby, and declared: 'I have gotten a male child from the Lord!' Commented Matthew Henry:⁵⁷⁶ "Children are God's gifts, and He must be acknowledged in the building up of our families.... Parents ought to bring up their children.... Give them a Bible and a calling..., and God be with them!"

In Genesis 4:3f, it is recorded that 'at the end of the days Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Now Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and of its fat. So the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.'

Here Henry said:⁵⁷⁷ "They kept their feast...perhaps...at the end of the days of the week.... Cain and Abel brought to Adam, as the priest of the family, 'an offering to the Lord'.... Observe here...that the religious worship of God is no novel invention, but an ancient institution. It is that which was 'from the beginning' (First John 1:1)....

"Truth got the start of error, and piety of profaneness.... It is a good thing for children to be well-taught when they are young, and trained up betimes in religious services – [so] that when they come to be capable of acting for themselves, they may of their own accord 'bring an offering to God.' In this 'nurture of the Lord' parents must bring up their children. Ephesians 6:4 [and Genesis] 18:19.

In Genesis 4:25f, we are told that Eve bare Adam another son, called Seth – in the place of Abel, whom Cain slew. 'Now also to Seth a son was born, and he called his name Enos. Then men began to call upon the Name of the Lord.'

Here, Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry commented⁵⁷⁸ anent the penitent Adam and Eve: "God gave them to see the reviving of religion in their family.... It is small comfort to a good man to see his children's children, if he do not withal see peace upon Israel and those that come of him – walking in the truth.... Now men began to worship God not only in their closets and families, but in public and solemn assemblies."

⁵⁷⁶ *Comm.*, I pp. 21f.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ib.*, 22.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ib.*, p. 27.

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In Genesis 6:18, God said to Noah: 'I shall establish My covenant with you.... You shall come into the ark – you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you!'

Here Matthew Henry commented:⁵⁷⁹ "God promises Noah that he and his should be preserved alive in the ark.... Nor was only he himself saved in the ark – but his wife, and his sons, and his sons' wives. Observe: (1) the care of good parents. They are solicitous not only for their own salvation, but for the salvation of their families and especially their children; (2) the happiness of those children that have godly parents. Their parents' piety often...furthers them in the way to eternal salvation, if they improve the benefit of it."

* * * * *

We defer discussing Job (until notes 597 to 601 below). In Genesis 12:3, God declares that 'all **families** of the Earth' shall be blessed in Abraham. Indeed, in Genesis 12:5-8, we are told that Abraham removed his own family from Haran – and went and built new altars in Canaan.

"As soon as Abram...got to Canaan," Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry here crisply commented,⁵⁸⁰ "he set up and kept up the worship of God in his family.... Wherever he had a tent, God had an altar – and that, an altar sanctified by prayer.... He instructed his family and neighbours in the knowledge of the true God and His holy religion. The souls he had gotten in Haran, being disciplined, must be taught further!"

"Note: those that would approve themselves the children of faithful Abram and would inherit the blessing of Abram – must make conscience of keeping up the solemn worship of God particularly in their families, according to the example of Abram! The way of family worship, is a good old way; is no novel invention, but the ancient usage of all the saints.

"Abram was very rich, and had a numerous family; was now unsettled, and in the midst of enemies.... Yet, wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar. Wherever we go, let us not fail to take our religion along with us!"

In Genesis 14:14, we read that Abraham equipped his 318 trained servants who had been born in his household. Here, Matthew Henry commented:⁵⁸¹ "With all speed, he armed his trained servants born in his house – to the number of three hundred and eighteen. A great family, but a small army.... He drew out...his

⁵⁷⁹ *Ib.*, p. 32.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ib.*, p. 51.

⁵⁸¹ *Ib.*, p. 56.

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catechised servants...instructed in the principles of religion. For Abram commanded his household to keep the way of the Lord....

"Note: those that have great families, have not only many bodies but [also] many souls beside their own to take care of.... Those that would be found [to be] the followers of Abram, must see that their servants be *catechised*!"

In Genesis 18:18f, God says: 'Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him. For 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.'

"Abraham," Matthew Henry commented here,⁵⁸² "will teach his household.... [Declares God:] 'I know Abraham very well, that he will command his children and his household after him.'

"Consider this...as a very bright part of Abraham's character and example. He not only prayed with his family, but he taught them as a man of knowledge.... He was very careful to teach and rule them well.

"Those that expect family-blessings, must make conscience of family-duty.... Abraham took care not only of his children, but of his household; his servants were catechized [Genesis 14:14].... Abraham made it his care and business to promote practical religion in his family....

"He taught them to keep 'the way of the Lord' and to do 'judgment and justice' – that is, to be serious and devout in the worship of God and to be honest in their dealings with all men.... Abraham herein had an eye to posterity, and was in care not only that his household *with* him but that his household *after* him should keep the way of the Lord – [so] that religion might flourish in his family, when he was in his grave."

* * * * *

In Genesis 26:3-5, God told Isaac: 'I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the sky, and will give all these countries to your seed.... In your seed, all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed – because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.'

Here, Matthew Henry commented:⁵⁸³ "We may go any whither, with comfort, when God's blessing goes with us.... We may stay anywhere, contentedly, if that

⁵⁸² *Ib.*, p. 69.

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blessing rest upon us.... He [God] recommended to him [Isaac] the good example of his father's obedience, as that which had preserved the entail of the covenant in his family....

"'Abraham obeyed My voice.' Do thou do so too – and the promise shall be sure to thee! ... Abraham's obedience was universal. He obeyed the original laws of nature; the revealed laws of divine worship, particularly that of circumcision; and all the extraordinary precepts God gave him.... Note: those only shall have the benefit and comfort of God's covenant with their godly parents, that tread in the steps of their obedience."

In Genesis 35:1-8, God told Jacob: 'Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God!' ... Then Jacob said to his household...: 'Let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar to God'.... So Jacob built there an altar, and called the place El-Beth-el.... Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died; and she was buried beneath Beth-el, under an oak."

Here, Matthew Henry commented:⁵⁸⁴ "Jacob commands his household to prepare for this solemnity; not only for the journey...but for the religious services that were to be performed. Before solemn ordinances, there must be solemn preparation....

"Masters of families should use their authority for the promoting of religion in their families. Not only we, but our houses also, should serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15. Observe the commands he gives his household, like Abraham [in] chapter 18:19....

"With these sacrifices, he [Jacob] joined praises for former mercies, particularly that which the sight of the place brought fresh to his remembrance; and he added prayers for the continuance of God's favour to him and his family.... He called the place, that is, the altar, 'El-Beth-el' – 'The God of Beth-el'....

"The comfort which the saints have in holy ordinances is not so much from 'Bethel-El' (the 'House of God') as from 'El-Beth-el' ('The God of the House'). The ordinances are but empty things, if we do not meet with God in them....

⁵⁸³ *Ib.*, p. 92.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 119f.

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"[His wife] Rebekah, probably, was dead, but her old nurse – of whom mention is made [in] chapter 24:59 – survived her.... Jacob took her to his family, to be...an instructor to his children. While they were at Beth-el, she died, and died lamented.... Family affliction may come even then, when family reformation and religion are on foot!"

* * * * *

In Exodus 20:4f, God calls idolatry iniquitous, and declares: 'I the Lord your 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 showing mercy unto thousands [of generations] of them that love Me and keep My Commandments.'

In his comment here, Matthew Henry pointed out⁵⁸⁵ that to God "idolatry is a violation of the covenant, and a blow at the root of all religion. He will 'visit it upon the children'.... Being a sin for which churches shall be unchurched, and a bill of divorce given them together with the parents, the children also shall be cast out of covenant and communion – [just] as with the parents the children [too] were at first taken in....

"He will bring such judgments upon a people as shall be the total ruin of families.... Nor is it an unrighteous thing with God – if the parents died in their iniquity, and the children tread in their steps and keep up false worships because they received them by tradition from their fathers. When the measure is full...God comes by His judgments...to bring into the account the idolatries their fathers were guilty of....

"Children are dear to their parents. Therefore, to deter men from idolatry – and to show how much God is displeased with it – not only a brand of infamy is, by it, entailed upon families.... The judgments of God may, for it, be executed upon the poor children when the parents are dead and gone!"

Yet Matthew Henry also noted 'the favour God would show to His faithful worshippers, 'keeping mercy for thousands' of persons – thousands of generations 'of them that love Me and keep My Commandments'.... Those that love God and keep those Commandments – shall receive grace to keep His other Commandments.

"Gospel-worship will have a good influence upon all manner of Gospel-obedience.... This mercy shall extend to 'thousands' – much further than the wrath threatened to those that hate Him.... For *that* reaches but to the third or fourth generation."

⁵⁸⁵ *Ib.*, p. 210.

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In Exodus 20:8-11, God says: 'Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy! ... The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord.... In it you shall not do any work – you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates.'

Matthew Henry here commented⁵⁸⁶ that "the Fourth Commandment concerns the time of worship. God is to be served and honoured **daily**. But *one day in seven* particularly is to be dedicated to His honour and spent in His service.... Who must observe it? 'You, and your son, and your daughter.' The wife is not mentioned, because she is supposed to be one with the husband and present with him.... If he sanctify the sabbath, it is taken for granted that she will join with him.

"But the rest of the family are specified. Children and servants must keep the sabbath, according to their age and capacity. In this, as in other instances of religion, it is expected that masters of families should take care not only to serve the Lord themselves.... Their houses also should serve him – at least [so] that it may not be through their neglect, if they do not. Joshua 24:15."

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In Exodus 29:38-42, God enjoins the men of Israel to offer upon the altar two lambs of the first year, day by day, continually – the one in the morning and the other in the evening. This was to be a continual burnt-offering, throughout their generations, at the door of the tent.

"This teaches us," commented⁵⁸⁷ Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry for Christians, "to offer up to God the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise every day, morning and evening, in humble acknowledgment of our dependence upon Him and our obligations to Him. Our daily devotions must be looked upon as the most needful of our daily works, and the most pleasant of our daily comforts.

"Whatever business we have, this [family worship] must never be omitted – either morning or evening. Prayer-time must be kept up, as duly as meat-time [or meal-times]. The daily sacrifices were as the daily meals in God's house – and therefore they were always attended with bread [yes, **daily** bread!]..... Those starve their own souls, that keep not up a constant attendance on the throne of grace....

"Great and precious promises [are] made of God's favour to Israel, and the tokens of His special presence with them – while they thus kept up His

⁵⁸⁶ *Ib.*, p. 211.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ib.*, p. 233.

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institutions among them. He speaks as one well-pleased with the appointment of the daily sacrifice.... It is constancy in religion that brings in the comfort of it. He promises...He would keep up communion with them."

In Numbers 28:2-9, God similarly (re-)enjoined Moses: "Command the children of Israel and say to them, 'My offering...you shall observe to offer unto Me'.... You shall offer unto the Lord two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other...in the evening.... And on the sabbath-day, two lambs of the first year without spot."

Commented Dr. Matthew Henry:⁵⁸⁸ "The daily lamb was offered morning and evening, and doubled on the sabbath-day.... The particular law of the daily sacrifice [was] a lamb in the morning and a lamb in the evening – which, for the constancy of it, as duly as the day came, is called a 'continual burnt-offering.'

"This intimates that, when we are bid to 'pray always' and to 'pray without ceasing' – it is intended that at least every morning and every evening we offer up our solemn prayers and praises to God." Compare: Ephesians 6:18 & 5:14-25 & 6:1-4 with First Thessalonians 5:17 & 4:4-11.

Continued Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry: "Every sabbath day, the offering must be doubled. Beside the two lambs offered for the daily burnt-offering, there must be two more offered – one (it is probable) added to the morning sacrifice, and the other to the evening....

"This teaches us to double our devotions on sabbath.... In Ezekiel's temple-service [46:4f], which points at Gospel-times, the sabbath-offerings were to be six lambs and a ram...to intimate not only the continuance but the advancement of sabbath-sanctification in the days of the Messiah."

* * * * *

In Deuteronomy 4:9f, God tells His people: "'Take heed to yourself...lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen...and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life! But teach them to your sons, and to your sons' sons! ... I will make them hear My words, so that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the Earth, and so that they may teach their children.'

⁵⁸⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 407f.

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Matthew Henry commented⁵⁸⁹ that the Lord here "charges them to teach their children to observe the Law of God." He said: "'Teach them to your sons, and to your sons' sons...[so] that they may teach their children'....

"Care must be taken in general to preserve the entail of religion among them, and to transmit the knowledge and worship of God to posterity. For the Kingdom of God in Israel was designed to be perpetual, if they did not forfeit the privilege of it....

"Parents must, in order hereunto, particularly take care to teach their own children the fear of God – and to train them up in an observance of all His Commandments."

In Deuteronomy 6:6f, God enjoins His people: "These words which I command you this day, shall be in your heart! And you shall teach them diligently to your children – and shall talk of them when you sit in your house; and when you walk by the way[side]; and when you lie down; and when you rise up!"

Matthew Henry here commented:⁵⁹⁰ "God's words must be laid up in our heart, [so] that our thoughts may be conversant daily with them, and employed about them.... They that love the Lord God themselves, should do what they can to engage the affections of their children to Him – and so preserve the entail of religion in their families from being cut off.

"You shall whet them diligently upon your children, so some read it – frequently repeat these things to them; try all ways of instilling them into their minds; and making them pierce into their hearts.... 'Be careful and exact in teaching your children – and aim, as by whetting, to sharpen them and put an edge upon them'...(say the Jews)....

"Moses thought his law so very plain and easy, that every father might be able to instruct his sons in it, and every mother her daughters. Thus, that good thing which is committed to us we must carefully transmit to those that come after us – so that it may be perpetuated.

"Pious discourse [should be practised]. You shall talk of these things with due reverence and seriousness for the benefit not only of your children but [also] of your other domestics, your friends and companions – as you sit in your house...or at meat or at rest; or receive visits; and when...at night you retire from your

⁵⁸⁹ *Ib.*, II p. 433.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ib.*, p. 438.

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family to lie down for sleep; and when in the morning you have arisen and return to your family again."

In Deuteronomy 6:17-21f, God enjoins: "You shall diligently keep the Commandments of the Lord! ... And when your son asks you in time to come, saying 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which the Lord our God has commanded you?' – then you shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand!'"

Commented Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry:⁵⁹¹ "He charges them to instruct their children in the commands of God, not only that they might in their tender years intelligently and affectionately join in religious services – but that afterward they might, in their day, keep up religion and convey it to those that should come after them...."

"Parents and teachers must give instruction to those under their charge, though they [the subordinates]...have an aversion to it... Much more must they be ready to answer questions and to give instruction when it is desired!"

In Deuteronomy 12:7 & 12:12, God commands: 'You shall rejoice! ... You shall rejoice before the Lord – you and your sons and your daughters...and your menservants and your maidservants...within your gates!'

Commented Matthew Henry:⁵⁹² "As to moral services – then, no doubt, as now – men might pray everywhere.... The command to do this, and the prohibition to the contrary, are here repeated again and again – as we teach children.... We are sure that there is in Scripture no vain repetition.... Even the children and servants must rejoice with them before God – [so] that the services of religion might be a pleasure [also] to them."

In Deuteronomy 32:7 & 32:46, God commands: 'Remember the days of old! Consider the years of many generations! Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you! ... Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which you shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this Law!'

Commented Matthew Henry:⁵⁹³ "Parents must diligently teach their children...the Word of God and His Law.... The duties he [Moses] charges upon

⁵⁹¹ *Ib.*, p. 439.

⁵⁹² *Ib.*, pp. 452f.

⁵⁹³ *Ib.*, pp. 503 & 508.

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them, are:- (1) Carefully to attend these things themselves.... (2) Faithfully to transmit these things to those that should come after them.

"What[ever] interest you have in your children, or influence upon them – use it for this purpose! ... Command them – as your father Abraham did, Genesis 18:19 – to observe to do all the words of this Law! They that are good themselves, cannot but desire that their children may be so likewise – and that posterity may keep up religion in their day, and the entail of it may not be cut off."

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Joshua (24:15) told the people of Israel: 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!' Matthew Henry here commented about Joshua:⁵⁹⁴ "Observe how positive he is – 'I will serve God!' It is no abridgment of our liberty to bind ourselves with a bond to God."

According to Matthew Henry, Joshua also so bound "his house – that is, his family, his children, and servants; such as were immediately under his eye and care.... Joshua was a ruler, a judge in Israel. Yet he will not make his necessary application to public affairs an excuse for the neglect of family-religion. Those that have the charge of many families – as Magistrates and Ministers – must take special care of their own. First Timothy 3:4-5. 'I and my house' will serve God!"

Henry also suggested Joshua may well have had a premonition or at least a suspicion that he himself might perhaps indeed be forsaken by his people – "but in his house, where his authority was greater and more immediate, there he would overrule.... Note: those that lead and rule in other things, should be first in the service of God....

"He resolves to do this, whatever others did. Though all the families of Israel should revolt from God and serve idols – yet Joshua and his family will steadfastly adhere to the God of Israel."

* * * * *

In Second Samuel 6:10f, we read of the ark that 'David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.'

⁵⁹⁴ *Ib.*, p. 584.

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Commenting on this, Matthew Henry urged:⁵⁹⁵ "Let masters of families be encouraged to keep up religion in their families, and to serve God and the interests of His Kingdom with their houses.... The ark is a guest which none shall lose by, that bid it welcome.

"Josephus says that whereas before, Obed-edom was poor – on a sudden, in these three months, his estate increased.... Piety is the best friend to prosperity.... His household shared in the blessing. It is good, living in a family that entertains the ark. For all about it, will fare the better."

Second Samuel 6:12-20 goes on to say that 'it was told King David that the Lord had blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that belonged to him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David, with gladness....

'David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord.... He blessed the people in the Name of the Lord of hosts, and he distributed among all the people...to every one a cake of bread.... So all the people departed, every one to his house[hold].... Then David returned [home] to bless his household."

Here Matthew Henry commented⁵⁹⁶ that "the blessing with which the house of Obed-edom was blessed for the ark's sake, was a great inducement to David to bring it forward.... We are likely to speed in our enterprises, when we begin with God and give diligence to make our peace with Him.... The people were then dismissed with great satisfaction. He sent them away...with a gracious prayer."

David, explained Henry, then "'blessed the people in the Name of the Lord of hosts'.... He prayed to God to bless them.... The great men, it is probable, he entertained at his own house. But to 'the whole multitude of Israel – as well to the women as to the men' (and 'children' says Josephus) – he dealt to each 'a cake of bread'....

"David, having dismissed the congregation with a blessing, 'returned to bless his household' (verse 20); that is, to pray with them and for them, and to offer up his family-thanksgiving.... Ministers must not think that their public performances will excuse them from their family worship. But when they have, with their instructions and prayers, blessed the solemn assemblies – they must return, in the same manner, to bless their households. For with them they are in a particular manner charged.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ib.*, p. 791.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 792f.

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"David, though he had prophets and priests and Levites about him to be his chaplains, yet did not devolve the work upon them – but himself 'blessed his household.' It is angels' work to worship God, and therefore surely that can be no disparagement [even] to the greatest of men. Never did David return to his house with so much pleasure and satisfaction!"

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In Job 1:1-3 we read that Job was perfect and upright and God-fearing, and that he had seven sons and three daughters and a very great household. Matthew Henry here commented:⁵⁹⁷ "He had a numerous family. He was eminent for religion, and yet not a hermit...."

"Children must be looked upon as blessings. For so they are, especially to good people that will give them good instructions and set them good examples and put up good prayers for them."

In Job 1:4-5 we read that whenever his sons 'feasted in their houses, every one upon his day, and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them...Job sent and sanctified them and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all.... Thus did Job continually.'

Commented Matthew Henry:⁵⁹⁸ "We have here a further account of Job's prosperity and his piety.... His great comfort in his children is taken notice of, as an instance of his prosperity...."

"Job himself mentions it as one of the greatest joys of his prosperous estate, that his children were about him. Chapter 29:5. They kept a circular feast at some certain times.... They went and feasted in their houses."

"It was a comfort to this good man...to see his children grown up and settled in the world. All his sons were in houses of their own, probably married.... To each of them he had given a competent portion to set up with. They that had been olive-plants round his table [*cf.* Psalm 128], were removed to tables of their own...."

"Good parents desire, promote and rejoice in their children's wealth and prosperity.... Especially to see them live in love and unity...is comfortable to the hearts of parents and comely in the eyes of all – to see brethren thus knit together. 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is!' Psalm 133:1...."

⁵⁹⁷ *Ib.*, III p. 3.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 3-4.

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"We do not find that Job himself feasted with them. Doubtless they invited him..., but he was old.... His great care about his children, is taken notice of as an instance of his piety. For, that we are *really* – which we are *relatively* [or *relationally*].

"Those that are good, will be good to their children – and especially do what they can for the good of their souls. Observe, verse 5, Job's pious concern for the spiritual welfare of his children.... He was the priest of the family, and at his altar they all attended – valuing their share in his prayers more than their share in his estate.

"Parents cannot give grace to their children. It is God that sanctifies. But they ought, by seasonable admonitions and counsels, to further their sanctification. In their baptism, they were sanctified to God. Let it be our desire and endeavour that they may be sanctified for Him!

"He [Job] 'offered sacrifice' to them...in the days of their feasting.... Job, like Abraham, had an altar for his family, on which it is likely he offered sacrifice daily.... He rose early, as one...whose heart was upon his work, and his desire towards it....

"He required his children to attend the sacrifice, that they might join with him in the prayers he offered with the sacrifice – [so] that the sight of the killing of the sacrifice might humble them much for their sins...and the sight of the offering of it up might lead them to a Mediator.... Thus he did continually....

"All days, every day, he offered up his sacrifices – was constant to his devotions, and did not omit them any day.... He that serves God uprightly, will serve Him continually."

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However, Job was soon to lose all of his children and all of his possessions – as well as his own very health itself. Then, in Job 29:2-5, the tribulated Job reminisced: 'Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me...when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me when my children were about me!'

Commenting on this former state of Job, Matthew Henry recalled⁵⁹⁹ "the communion he had with the Divine Word. 'The secret of God was upon my tabernacle' – that is, when God conversed freely with him, as one bosom-friend with another....

⁵⁹⁹ *Ib.*, p. 91.

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"God communicates His favour and grace to His people, and receives the returns of their devotion in a way secret to the world. Some read it 'when the society of God was in my tabernacle' – which Rabbi Solomon understands of an assembly of God's people...at Job's house for religious worship in which he presided....

"God's presence with a man in his house, though it be but a cottage, makes it both a castle and a palace.... He had comfort in his family.... He had both mouths for his meat, and meat for his mouths.... He had a numerous offspring to enjoy his estate – 'my children were about me.'

"He had many children, enough to compass him round.... It is a comfort to tender parents to see their children about them. Job speaks very feelingly of this comfort.... He thought it an instance of God's being with him, that his children were about him."

In Job 38:7, God goes on to remind Job of the time the Earth was founded. That was the time 'when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'

Commented Matthew Henry:⁶⁰⁰ "Let him [Job] repeat, if he can, the songs of praise which were sung at that solemnity...'when the morning stars sang together'.... [Then] the blessed angels...who in the morning of time shone bright as the morning-star, [were] going immediately before the light – which God commanded to shine out of darkness upon the seeds of this lower world the Earth....

"They were 'the sons of God' who 'shouted for joy' when they saw the foundations of the Earth laid.... Though it was not made for them but for the children of men...yet they knew that the Eternal Wisdom and Word Whom [also] they were to worship...would 'rejoice in the habitable parts of the Earth'.... Much of His 'delight would be in the sons of men.' Proverbs 8:31....

"The angels are called 'the sons of God' because they bear much of His image; are with Him in His house above; and serve Him as a son does his father.... The work of angels is to praise God. The more we abound in holy, humble, thankful, joyful praise – the more we do the will of God, as they do it.... They were unanimous in singing God's praises. They sang together with one accord, and there was no jar in their harmony. The sweetest concerts, are in praising God!"

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⁶⁰⁰ *Ib.*, p. 123.

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In Psalm 1:1-2, God declares: 'Thrice-blessed is the man that does not keep on walking in the counsel of the ungodly, nor keep on standing in the way of sinners, nor keep on sitting in the seat of the scornful – but his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law he keeps on meditating day and night.'

Commented Matthew Henry:⁶⁰¹ "We must not only set ourselves to meditate on God's Word, morning and evening, at the entrance of the day and of the night. But these thoughts should be interwoven with the business and converse of every day, and with the repose and slumbers of every night."

In Psalm 55:17, David declares: 'Evening and morning, and at noon, I will pray and cry out aloud – and He shall hear my voice.' Matthew Henry commented:⁶⁰² "He will pray frequently, every day, and three times a day – evening, and morning, and at noon. It is probable that this had been his constant practice, and he resolves to continue it...."

"As it is fit that in the morning we should begin the day with God, and in the evening close it with Him – so it is fit that in the midst of the day we should retire a while to converse with Him. It was Daniel's practice to pray three times a day (Daniel 6:10).... Let us not be weary of praying often, for God is not weary of hearing!"

In Psalm 78:3-7, Asaph asserts: 'That which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children – showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. For He established a testimony...and appointed a Law...which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children – so that the generation to come might know them; even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children so that they might set their hope in God.'

Commented Matthew Henry:⁶⁰³ "The honour we owe to our parents and ancestors obliges us to attend to that which our fathers have told us and, as far as it appears to be true and good, to receive it with so much the more reverence and regard.... Things of undoubted certainty...are to be transmitted to posterity.... It lies as a charge upon us, carefully to hand them down...because our fathers told them us."

"'We will not hide them from their children!' Our children are called theirs. For they were in care for their seed's seed, and looked upon them as theirs.... In

⁶⁰¹ *Ib.*, p. 141.

⁶⁰² *Ib.*, p. 263.

⁶⁰³ *Ib.*, p. 314.

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teaching our children the knowledge of God, we repay to our parents some of that debt we owe to them for teaching us. Nay, if we have no children of our own – we must declare the things of God to their children, the children of others....

"That which we are to transmit to our children is not only the knowledge of languages, arts and sciences, liberty and property – but especially the praises of the Lord and His strength appearing in the wonderful works He has done. Our great care must be to lodge our religion, that great deposit, pure and entire in the hands of those that succeed us....

"Therefore, as God provided for a succession of Ministers in the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron – so He appointed that parents should train up their children in the knowledge of His Law.... When they were grown up, they must arise and declare them to their children...[so] that as one generation of God's servants and worshippers passes away, another generation may come – and the Church, as the Earth, may abide for ever; and thus God's Name among men may be as the days of Heaven.... God gave order that His Laws should be made known to posterity.... Let these be told to our children, and our children's children!"

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In Psalm 118:15, David declares: 'The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.'

Matthew Henry commented:⁶⁰⁴ "'The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous' and in mine – particularly in my family. The dwelling of the righteous in this world are but tabernacles.... But these tabernacles are more comfortable to them than the palaces of the wicked are to them. For in the house where religion rules...there is salvation – safety from evil [and] earnest of eternal salvation which 'is come to this house.' Luke 19:9....

"Where there is salvation, there is cause for rejoicing – for continual joy in God. Holy joy is called 'the joy of salvation' – for in that, there is abundant matter for joy....

"Where there is rejoicing, there ought to be 'the voice' of rejoicing – praise and thanksgiving. Let God be served with joyfulness and gladness of heart; and let the voice of that rejoicing be heard daily in our families, to the glory of God, and the encouragement of others!"

⁶⁰⁴ *Ib.*, p. 404.

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In Psalm 119:147 & 119:164, David declares: 'I preceded the dawning of the morning and cried out, "I put my trust in Your Word! My eyes precede the night-watches, so that I might meditate in Your Word.... I praise You."'

Here, Matthew Henry commented:⁶⁰⁵ "The more intimately we converse with the Word of God, and the more we dwell upon it in our thoughts – the better able we shall be to speak to God in His own language, and the better we shall know what to pray for as we ought. Reading the Word will not serve; but we must meditate in it! ... He [preceded or] 'prevented the dawning of the morning'...and 'the night-watches.'

"See here...that David was an early riser – which perhaps contributed to his eminency. He was none of those that say, 'Yet a little sleep!' [Proverbs 6:10].... He began the day with God. The first thing he did in the morning, before he admitted any business, was to pray – when his mind was most fresh, and in the best frame.

"If our first thoughts in the morning be of God, it will help to keep us in His fear all the day long.... He [David] esteemed the words of God's mouth more than his necessary repose – which we can as ill spare as our food. Job 23:12.... He would redeem time for religious exercises. He was full of business all day. But that will excuse no man from secret devotion!

"It is better to take time from sleep, as David did, than not to find time for prayer! ... We must praise God at every meal; praise Him upon all occasions; in everything give thanks!"

Also on Psalm 122:1, Henry insisted:⁶⁰⁶ "We ought to worship God in our own houses.... We should...excite and stir up one another...to worship God."

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Psalm 127 reads: 'Except the Lord build the house – they labour in vain that keep on building it.... Look, children are a heritage of the Lord!'

Here, Henry commented:⁶⁰⁷ "This is a family psalm.... In singing this psalm, we must have our eye up unto God for success in all our undertakings."

⁶⁰⁵ *Ib.*, pp. 424-26.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ib.*, p. 430.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ib.*, p. 435.

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In Psalm 128, we read: 'Blessed is everyone that keeps on fearing the Lord.... Your wife shall be like the fruitful vine.... Your children [shall be] like olive-plants around your table.... You shall see your children's children, and peace!'

Here, Matthew Henry comments:⁶⁰⁸ "This, as the former, is a psalm for families.... We are taught that the prosperity of our families depends upon the blessing of God....

"We are taught that the only way to obtain that blessing which will make our families comfortable, is to live in the fear of God.... They that do so, in general, shall be blessed.... They shall live to see their families brought up....

"It is pleasant to parents who have a table spread...to see their children round about them.... Parents love to have their children at table, to keep up the pleasantness of the table-talk...and...sucking in the sap of their good education.... A good man can have...comfort in seeing his children's children...and have hopes of transmitting the entail of religion pure and entire to those that come after him. For that is the best inheritance."

In Psalm 145:1-4, David promises God: 'I will bless Your Name for ever and ever.... Every day will I bless You, and I will praise Your Name for ever and ever.... One generation shall praise Your works to another.'

Here, Matthew Henry commented: "Praising God must be our daily work. No day must pass – though so busy a day, though ever so sorrowful a day – without praising God. We ought to reckon it the most needful of our daily employments, and the most delightful of our daily comforts....

"'I will bless Thee for ever and ever'.... This intimates...he resolved to continue in this work to the end of his life.... The psalms...should be made use of in praising God, by the Church, to the end of time.... Others also would be forward to this work.... 'They shall concur in it now; they shall join with me in it'....

"David's zeal would provoke many; and it has done so.... 'They shall keep it up when I am gone, in an uninterrupted succession'.... [Hence:] 'One generation shall praise Thy works to another.' The generation that is gone off, shall tell them to that which is rising up.... The generation that is rising up, shall follow the example.....

"The death of God's worshippers, shall be no diminution of His worship. For a new generation shall rise up in their room, to carry on that good work...to the end

⁶⁰⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 436f, 458 & 465.

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of time – when it shall be left to *that* World to do it in, in which there is no succession of generations."

Then, in Psalm 148:12f, God enjoins: "Both young men and maidens; old men and children – let them praise the Name of the Lord!" Here, Matthew Henry comments: "God is to be praised also in the constitution of families, for He is the Founder of them.... For all the comforts of relations – the comforts that parents and children, brothers and sisters, have in each other – God is to be praised...."

"God is to be glorified by these. Let all manner of persons praise God.... 'Old men' must still bring forth this fruit in old age, and not think that either the gravity or the infirmity of their age will excuse them from it.... 'Children' too must begin betimes to praise God. Even 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings' [Psalm 8:2f & Matthew 21:16], this good work is perfected."

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In Proverbs 1:8f, David's son Solomon in turn urges his own child: 'My son, keep on hearing the instruction of your father – and do not forsake the law of your mother! For they shall be an ornament of grace for your head.'

Here, Henry commented⁶⁰⁹ that Solomon "means not only that he would have his own children to be observant of him and of what he said to them; nor only that he would have his pupils and those who came to him to be taught, to look upon him as their father and attend to his precepts with the disposition of children.... He would have all children to be dutiful and respectful to their parents, and to conform to the virtuous and religious education which they give them according to the Law of the Fifth Commandment...."

"He takes it for granted that parents will, with all the wisdom they have, instruct their children – and, with all the authority they have, give law to them for their good.... Abraham will not only catechise, but command, his household [*cf.* Genesis 14:14 & 18:19]. Both the father and the mother must do all they can, for the good education of their children...."

In Proverbs 3:33, Solomon says: 'The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked. But He blesses the habitation of the just.'

⁶⁰⁹ *Ib.*, p. 471.

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Matthew Henry here commented⁶¹⁰ that "sinners are under the curse of God – they and their houses." On the other hand, "saints are under His blessing – they and their habitation...."

"The just have a habitation; a poor cottage (the word is used for sheep-cots); a very mean dwelling. But God blesses it. He is continually blessing it, from the beginning of the year to the end of it."

In Proverbs 4:1-4, Solomon states: 'Hear, you children, the instruction of a father! ... For I give you good doctrine.... For I was my father's son.... He taught me also and said to me, "Let your heart retain my words; keep my commandments, and live!"' In Proverbs 4:20, Solomon himself adds: 'My son, attend to my words!'

Here, Matthew Henry commented:⁶¹¹ "Magistrates and Ministers, who are intrusted with the conduct of larger societies, are concerned to take a more than ordinary care for the good instruction of their own families. From this duty, their public work will by no means excuse them.

"This charity must begin at home – though it must not end there. For he that has not his children in subjection with all gravity and does not take pains in their good education – how shall he do his duty as he ought 'to the Church of God'? First Timothy 3:4f...."

"Let all young people, in the days of their childhood and youth, take pains to get knowledge and grace! For that is their learning-age, and then their minds are formed and seasoned...."

"Observe how he [Solomon] came by these instructions! He had them from his parents, and teaches his children the same that they taught him.... His parents loved him, and therefore taught him. 'I was my father's son'.... He was 'tender and only-beloved in the sight of his mother.'

"Surely there was a manifest reason for making such a distinction, when both the parents made it.... We see how they showed their love. They catechised him; kept him to his book; and held him to a strict discipline...."

"What his parents taught him, he teaches others.... When Solomon was grown up, he not only remembered but took a pleasure in repeating the good lessons his parents taught him when he was a child. He did not forget them – so deep were the impressions they made upon him...."

⁶¹⁰ *Ib.*, p. 480.

⁶¹¹ *Ib.*, pp. 480-83.

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"They that would learn well and teach well in religion," continued Henry, "must not effect...new-found notions.... We must keep to the good old *way*. Why should we scorn the good old *words* (Jeremiah 6:16)? ... Solomon, having been well-educated by his parents, thought himself thereby obliged to give his children a good education – the same that his parents had given him....

"This is one way in which we must requite our parents for the pains they took with us – even by showing piety at home. First Timothy 5:4. They taught us, not only [so] that we may learn ourselves – but [in addition so] that we might teach our children the good knowledge of God. Psalm 78:6....

"We are false to a trust, if we do not. For the sacred deposit of religious doctrine and law was lodged in our hands, with a charge to transmit it pure and entire to those that shall come after us. Second Timothy 2:2....

"Be it taken notice of, to the honour of religion, that the wisest and best men in every age have been most zealous not only for the practice of it themselves but [also] for the propagating of it to others.... We should therefore 'continue in the things which we have learned, knowing of whom we have learned them.' Second Timothy 3:14....

"David, in teaching his son, though he was a child of great capacity and quick apprehension – to show that he was in good earnest, and to affect his child the more with what he said – expressed himself with great warmth and importunity, and inculcated the same thing again and again. **So** children must be taught!

"Deuteronomy 6:7, 'you shall whet them [the teachings] diligently upon your children!' David, though he was a man of public business, and had tutors for his son – took all this pains with him himself.... He recommends to him his Bible and his catechism.... We must have a continual regard to the Word of God."

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According to Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry, even the significant sexual section in Proverbs 5:15-19 has great implications for daily family worship. Solomon had just implied (in Proverbs 5:3-14) that prostitutes are poisonous puddles or polluted cesspools, to be avoided at all costs. He then immediately went on to compare one's own godly wife – to a pure cistern or fountain. He also compared one's own covenant children – to rivers of water. They, he said, should be expected – in time – to gush forth abroad from one's home, and refreshingly irrigate society at large.

Enjoins Solomon: 'Drink waters from your **own** cistern, and running waters out of your **own** well! Let your fountain be dispersed abroad! ... Let your

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fountain be blessed; and rejoice with the wife of your youth! ... Let **her** breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished **always** with **her** love! Proverbs 5:15-19.

Here, Matthew Henry commented: "Let him that is married, take delight in his wife! ... 'Let thy fountain be blessed!' Verse 18. Think thyself very happy in her! Look upon her as a blessed wife! Let her have thy blessing! Pray **daily** for her, and then *rejoice **with** her!* Those comforts we are likely to have joy of, that are sanctified to us by **prayer**, and the blessing of God [First Timothy 4:1-5].

"It is not only allowed us, but commanded us, to be pleasant with our relations [alias our relatives].... It particularly becomes yoke-fellows to rejoice **together** and in each **other** [Matthew 19:5-6]. **Mutual** delight is the bound of fidelity.... Ecclesiastes 9:9, 'Live joyfully **with** thy wife whom thou lovest, **all** the **days** of thy life!' Those take...their comforts there, where God has appointed...with their **families** at **home**....

"Desire no better diversion from severe study and business, than the innocent and pleasant conversation of thine own wife! Let her lie in thy bosom, as the poor man's ewe-lamb did in his (Second Samuel 13:3) and do thou repose thy head in hers, and let that 'satisfy thee at **all** times!' ... This is 'drinking waters' to quench the thirst of thine appetite 'out of thine own cistern' – and 'running waters' which are clear and sweet and wholesome 'out of thine own well.' Verse 15. First Corinthians 7:2-3.

"Let him take delight in his children, and look upon them with pleasure. Verses 16-17. 'Look upon them as streams from thine own pure fountains.... Keep to thine own wife, and thou shalt have...a numerous offspring – like 'rivers of water' which run in abundance.... They shall be dispersed abroad; matched into other **families!**'"

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In Proverbs 6:20-23, God enjoins through Solomon to his own child (and thereby also to the child of every believer): "My son, keep your father's commandment, and do not forsake the law of your mother! Bind them [both] continually upon your heart! ... When you sleep, it shall guard you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you.... The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."

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Here, Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry commented:⁶¹² "We must look upon the Word of God both as a light...and as a law.... We must receive it as our father's commandment, and as the law of our mother.... It is God's Commandment, and His Law.

"But (1), our parents directed us to it: put it into our hands, trained us up in the knowledge and observance of it – its origin...and obligations being most sacred.... We were beholden to them for recommending it to us; and see all the reason in the world to 'continue in the things we have learned, knowing of whom we have learned them' [Second Timothy 1:5f & 3:14f]....

"(2) the cautions, counsels and commands which our parents gave us – agree with the Word of God.... Therefore we must hold them fast. Children, when they are grown up, must remember 'the law' of a good 'mother' as well as the 'commandments' of a good 'father'.... We must retain the Word of God, and the good instructions which our parents gave us out of it....

"*When thou sleepest, and liest exposed to the malignant powers of darkness, it shall keep thee'.... We may shelter ourselves under the promises of the Word at night.... 'When thou awakest in the morning, and art contriving the work of the day, it shall talk with thee about it, and help thee to contrive for the best.'* Psalm 1:2.... It would contribute to our close...walking with God all day, if we would begin with Him in the morning and let His Word be the subject of our first thoughts."

For Matthew Henry's discussion of Proverbs 8:22-35, see above in our own Preface. In Proverbs 22:6, the apparently middle-aged Solomon – himself previously so trained from childhood by his father David, declares (it would seem to his own adult son): "Train up a child in the way he should go. Then, when he gets old[er], he will not depart from it."

Commented Dr. Matthew Henry:⁶¹³ "Here is (1) a great duty enjoined, particularly to those that are parents and instructors of children – in order to the propagating of wisdom.... 'Train up children'...in that learning age, to prepare them for what they are designed for.

"'Catechise' them; initiate them; keep them under discipline! 'Train' them as soldiers who are taught to handle their arms; keep rank; and observe the word of command [*cf.* Genesis 14:14 & 18:19]....

⁶¹²*Ib.*, p. 489.

⁶¹³*Ib.*, p. 544.

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"Train up a child'...with a gentle hand, as nurses feed children, little and often. Deuteronomy 6:7.... When they 'grow up'...they 'will not depart from it.' Good impressions made upon them then [while children], will abide upon them all their days. Ordinarily, the vessel retains the savour with which it was first seasoned."

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In Jeremiah 7:18f, God states His great fury toward many Old Testament Israelites. The Lord was angry, because fathers and their womenfolk and their children were then all committing 'family idolatry' – rather than practising family worship.

Commented Matthew Henry:⁶¹⁴ "Let us be instructed, even by this bad example, in the service of our God! ... Let us bring up our children in the acts of devotion! Let them, as they are capable, be employed in doing something toward the keeping up of religious exercises!"

In Jeremiah 10:6f & 10:24f, the prophet prays: 'O Lord, You are great, and Your Name is great in might! Who would not fear You, O King of nations? ... O Lord, correct me...with judgment! Pour out Your fury upon the heathen that do not know You – and upon the families that do not call on Your Name!'

Jeremiah, Matthew Henry here commented,⁶¹⁵ "imprecates the divine wrath against the oppressors and persecutors of Israel.... This prayer does not come from a spirit of malice or revenge, nor is it intended to prescribe to God whom He should execute His judgments upon.... But it is an appeal to His justice...."

"They [the heathen] do not know Him – nor desire to know Him! They are 'families' that live without prayer – that have nothing of religion among them. They call not on God's Name. Those that restrain prayer, prove that they know not God."

Then, in Jeremiah 31:1f, God forecast the then-later advent of the New Testament (*cf.* Hebrews 8:8-11f). Thus the Lord there predicts: 'I will be the God of all the **families** of Israel, and they shall be My people!'

Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry commented:⁶¹⁶ "God here assures...that...His Own people shall be owned by Him as the children of His love.... I will show Myself," He declares, "to 'be the God of all the families of Israel' [Jeremiah 31:1].... Not of the house of Aaron only, and the families of Levi – but of all their families. Not

⁶¹⁴ *Ib.*, IV p. 913.

⁶¹⁵ *Ib.*, p. 927.

⁶¹⁶ *Ib.*, p. 995.

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only their state in general – but their particular families, and the interests of them, shall have the benefit of a special relation to God.

"Note, the families of good people – in their family capacity – may apply themselves to God, and stay themselves upon Him as their God. If we and our houses serve the Lord – we and our houses shall be protected and blessed by Him. Proverbs 3:33."

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In Zechariah 12:11-14, God predicts that soon after Calvary and upon Pentecost Sunday and thereafter – there would be a great mourning because of sin. This would be a mourning by 'every family apart' in its own home.

Here, Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry correctly commented⁶¹⁷ that this is "a private, particular mourning. There shall be not only a mourning 'of the land' by its representatives in a general assembly.... 'Every family apart' shall mourn" – in addition. Henry then correctly concluded: "The exercises of devotion should be performed by private families among themselves – besides their joining in public assemblies.... Fasts must be observed not only in our synagogues, but in our houses....

"Four several families are here specified as examples to others.... Two of them are sacred families.... 'The family of the house of Levi' (which was God's tribe); and in it particularly the family of Shimei, which was a branch of the tribe of Levi (First Chronicles 6:17).... Probably, some of the descendants of that family were now of note for preachers to the people....

"In times of general tribulation and humiliation, the Lord's Ministers are concerned to 'weep between the porch and the altar' (Joel 2:17) – and not only but in their houses apart. For in what families should godliness, both in the form and in the power of it, be found: if not in Ministers' families?"

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The last prophet of the Old Testament, Malachi [1:6], reminds God's people that 'a son honours his father.' Matthew Henry commented:⁶¹⁸ "A son honours his father, because he is his father. Nature has written this law in the hearts of children, before God wrote it at Mount Sinai....

⁶¹⁷ *Ib.*, p. 1496.

⁶¹⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 1504f.

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"Children and servants pay respect to their parents and masters.... Shame on them if they do not! ... Their own hearts cannot but reproach them.... The order of families is thus kept up, and it is their beauty and advantage....

"We are every one of us to look upon God as our 'Father' and 'Master'.... Our relation to God...strongly obliges us to fear and honour Him.... If we honour and fear the fathers of our flesh, much more the Father and Master of our spirits! Hebrews 12:9."

At Malachi 1:11, God then predicts: 'From the rising of the sun even until it sets, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles.... In every place, incense shall be offered to My Name, and a pure offering. For My Name shall be great among the heathen!'

Here Henry commented:⁶¹⁹ "Instead of His being worshipped and served among the Jews only (a small people in a corner of the world) – He will be served and worshipped in all places, 'from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.' 'In every place.' In every part of the world, 'incense shall be offered to His Name.' Nations shall be discipled.... There shall be those among the Gentiles who shall magnify and glorify the Name of God better than ever the Jews had done, even the priests themselves!"

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In Malachi 2:14-16, God condemned the Hebrews of that time for their adulteries and their corresponding neglect of their families. As Matthew Henry here commented,⁶²⁰ "they did not behave as they ought to do toward their wives.... When they came with their wives and families to worship God at the solemn feasts, which they should have done with rejoicing – they were all out of humour. The poor wives were ready to break their hearts....

"This is illustrated by the instance of Hannah," explained Henry. She, "upon the account of her husband's having another wife (though otherwise a kind husband), and the discontent thence arising – whenever they went up to the house of the Lord to worship, '[she] fretted and wept' and was in 'bitterness of soul' and 'would not eat.' First Samuel 1:6,7,10.

"So it was with these wives here [in Malachi 2:14-16 *etc.*]. This was so contrary to the cheerfulness which God requires in His worshippers, that it spoiled the acceptableness of their devotions....

⁶¹⁹ *Ib.*, p. 1506.

⁶²⁰ *Ib.*, pp. 1510f.

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"Wherefore did He make but one woman for one man [Genesis 2:18-25]? It was [so] that He might seek a godly seed' – a 'seed of God' (so the word is) – a seed that should bear the image of God; be employed in the service of God; and be devoted to His glory and honour....

"The children, being born in holy matrimony (which is an ordinance of God), and by which the inclinations of nature are kept under the regulations of God's command – might thus be made a 'seed to serve Him' and be bred [or reared] as they are born [or generated] under His direction and dominion. Note, the raising up of a 'godly seed' which shall be 'accounted to the Lord for a generation' is one great end of the institution of marriage....

"Husbands and wives must therefore live in the fear of God, [so] that their seed may be a 'godly seed.' Else were they 'unclean'; but 'now they are holy.'" First Corinthians 7:14.

For such 'godly seed' – continued Henry – are "children of the covenant, the marriage-covenant which was a type of the covenant of grace...and the conjugal union (when thus preserved entire) of the mystical union between Christ and His Church in which He seeks and secures to Himself a 'godly seed.' See Ephesians 5:25,32."

Concluded Matthew Henry of the Lord God: "He is much displeased with those who go about to 'put asunder what He has joined together.' Malachi 2:15-16. 'The God of Israel saith that He hateth putting away [alias divorce]'... 'Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let nobody deal treacherously against the wife of his youth!'"

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Through Malachi 3:5, the Lord then continues to say: 'I will come near to you in judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers.' Malachi (3:16) himself next records: "Then they that fear the Lord, spake often one to another – and the Lord hearkened, and heard it.'

Naturally, it is not adulterers but especially happily married spouses (and their children) who "fear the Lord" and speak "often one to another" about Him. They do the latter, especially during regular family worship.

Commented Henry:⁶²¹ "'They feared the Lord.' That is the beginning of wisdom, and the root of all religion. They revered the majesty of God, submitted to His authority, and had a dread of His wrath in all they thought and

⁶²¹ *Ib.*, p. 1516.

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said.... They 'thought upon His Name.' They seriously considered, and frequently meditated upon, the discoveries [or disclosures] God has made of Himself in His Word....

"They 'spake often one to another' concerning the God they 'feared'.... They that 'feared the Lord' kept together, as those that were company for each other. They spake kindly and endearingly one to another, for the preserving and promoting of mutual love – [so] that they might not wax cold [*cf.* First Peter 3:7 & 4:10f].... Then, when religion was reproached and misrepresented, its friends did all they could to support the credit of it."

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In Malachi 4:1-5f (*cf.* 3:1f), the prophet predicted the coming of the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Malachi urged God's people to await that day of Christ's advent – by remembering the Law of Moses, and by expecting John the Baptizer as a greater Elijah who would first come and prepare the way for the advent of the Lord Messiah Himself.

'You must remember the Law of Moses!' – warned God through Malachi. 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord – and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the land with a curse!'

Commented Matthew Henry:⁶²² "They must keep up a believing expectation of the Gospel of Christ – and must look for the beginning of it in...Elijah the prophet.... 'Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet'.... The Spirit of prophecy...shall revive again in one that shall be sent 'in the spirit and power of Elijah,' Luke 1:17....

"Who is this prophet that shall be sent? It is Elijah.... We Christians know very well that John Baptist was the Elijah that was to come. Matthew 17:10-13 – and very expressly [in] Matthew 11:14....

"'He shall turn the heart of the fathers to their children, and the heart of the children to their fathers'.... He shall be employed in this work; he shall endeavour it; his doctrine and baptism shall have a direct tendency to it and, with many, shall be successful....

⁶²² *Ib.*, pp. 1519f.

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"He shall turn the hearts of the fathers with the children and of the children with the fathers...to God and to their duty. He shall call upon young and old to repent.... Thus he shall be an instrument to revive and confirm love and unity among relations and shall bring them closer and bind them faster to each other, by bringing and binding them all to their God."

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Jesus re-affirms the above teachings on the importance of marriage and the family. In Matthew 19:4-6, He rebuked the Pharisees: 'Have you people not read that He Who made them [man and wife] at the beginning, made them male and female?' Then He said: 'For this reason, a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife – and they two shall become one flesh. Therefore they are no more two, but one flesh. Hence – let not man put asunder, that which God has joined together!' See too Genesis 1:26-28 & 2:34-25.

Here Matthew Henry commented: "Husband and wife are of God's joining together.... *Sunezeuxen* – 'He hath yoked them together.' So the word is, and it is very significant [*cf.* too First Peter 3:7]. God Himself instituted the relation between husband and wife in the state of innocence. Marriage and the sabbath are the most ancient of divine ordinances. Though marriage be not peculiar to the church, but common to the world – yet, begin stamped with a divine institution and here ratified by our Lord Jesus, it ought to be managed after a godly sort, and **sanctified** by the **Word of God** and **prayer**." First Timothy 4:1-5.

At least implicitly, Jesus endorses the sanctity of marriage and the family – and hence also the duty of daily household worship – even in the Lord's Prayer. There He taught, and still teaches, to His disciples and their children: 'Our heavenly Father! ... Keep on giving us, this day, our daily bread!' Thus Matthew 6:9f.

Here Matthew Henry commented:⁶²³ "Because our natural being is necessary to our spiritual well-being in this world, therefore – after the things of God's glory, Kingdom and will – we pray for the necessary supports and comforts of this present life, which are the gifts of God....

"'Bread for the day approaching,' for all the remainder of our lives.... 'Food convenient for us' and our **families**, according to our rank and station.... We ask for our 'daily' bread.... We beg of God to 'give' it us.... The greatest of men must be beholden to the mercy of God for their 'daily bread'.... Give it to 'us' – not to me only, but to others in common with me....

⁶²³ *Ib.*, V pp. 43f.

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"It intimates also, that we ought to pray with our **families**. We and our household eat together, and therefore ought to pray together.... We pray that God would give it us 'this day' – which teaches us to renew the desire of our souls toward God, as the wants of our bodies are renewed. As duly as the day comes, we must pray to our heavenly Father, and reckon we could as well go a day without meat – as without prayer!"

Henry continued: "Most of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer had been commonly used by the Jews in their devotions, or words to the same effect." This shows Henry's antidispensationalistic awareness of the continuity also of daily family worship – from the Old(er) and into the New(er) Testament.

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This is also seen from Luke 11:2f where, just after Christ Himself was praying, 'one of His disciples said to Him: "Lord, teach us to pray – as John too taught his disciples!" Then He said: "When you pray, say: 'Our heavenly Father! ... Keep on giving us, day by day, our daily bread!'"

Soon thereafter, in Luke 11:11f, Jesus added: 'If a son shall keep on asking bread from any of you that is a father – will he give him a stone? Or if he keep on asking a fish – will he for a fish give him a serpent?

"Or if he shall keep on asking...an egg – will he offer him a scorpion? If you, then, being evil, know how to keep on giving good gifts to your children – how much more shall your heavenly Father keep on giving the Holy Spirit to them that keep on asking Him?"

Here Henry commented⁶²⁴ that the disciples of Jesus Christ reminded Him that John the Baptizer "took care to instruct his disciples in this necessary duty" of daily prayer. "We would be taught as they were – for we have a better master than they had!"

Henry then pointed out that the great Westminster Assembly theologian Rev. "Dr. Lightfoot's notion of this, is that...John taught his disciples such prayers as were more filled with petitions and requests. For it is said of them that they did...'make prayers.' Luke 5:33. The word signifies such prayers as are properly petitionary....

"'Lord,'" Christ's disciples therefore as much as asked Him, "'teach us those – to be added to those benedictions of the Name of God, which we have been accustomed to from our childhood!'" That, then, is the sense.

⁶²⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 390-92.

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Henry added: "If our first chief desire and care be that God's Name may be sanctified; His Kingdom come; and His will be done – we may then come boldly to the throne of grace for our 'daily bread' – which will then be sanctified to us when we are sanctified to God, and God is sanctified by us.... In our prayers for temporal blessings, we must moderate our desires and confine them to a competency. The expression here used of 'day by day' – is the very same with our 'daily bread'...."

"He [Jesus] gives us both instruction and encouragement in prayer, from the consideration of our relation to God as Father. Here is...an appeal to the bowels of earthly fathers: 'Let any of you that is a father – and knows the heart of a father, a father's affection to a child, and care for a child – tell me!'"

"If his son ask bread for his breakfast – will he [his father] give him a stone to breakfast on? If he ask a fish for his dinner...[or lunch] – will he, for a fish, give him a serpent that will poison and sting him? Or if he shall ask for an egg for his supper (and egg and to bed) – will he offer him a scorpion?"

"You know you could not be so unnatural to your own children! ... If you then, being evil, give...good gifts to your children – much more shall God give you the Spirit! He shall give good things...."

"The gift of the Holy Ghost is in the covenant. Acts 2:33-38f.... It is here inferred...from parents' readiness to supply their children's needs and gratify their desires, when they are natural and proper...."

"When God's children ask for the Spirit, they do in effect ask for bread. For the Spirit is the Staff of life. Nay, He is the Author of the soul's life! If our earthly parents (though evil) be yet so kind – if they, though weak, be yet so knowing that they...give with discretion...in the best manner and time – much more shall your heavenly Father, Who infinitely excels the fathers of our flesh both in wisdom and goodness, give you His Holy Spirit!"

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In Acts 10:2f, the same Luke tells us about an Italian Army Officer – Cornelius. He, explains Luke, was 'a devout man – and one that feared God with all his house...and prayed to God always.'

Here, Henry commented:⁶²⁵ "He kept up religion in his family. He 'feared God with all his house.' He would not admit any idolaters under his roof; but took care that not himself only, but all his, should serve the Lord. Every good man will do

⁶²⁵ *Ib.*, VI p. 788.

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what he can, [so] that those about him may be good too.... He was much in prayer. He 'prayed to God always.' He kept up stated times for prayer, and was constant to them."

In Acts 16:14f, Luke tells of 'a certain woman name Lydia...who worshipped God.... The Lord opened her heart, so that she gave attention to the things which were spoken by Paul.... When she was baptized – and her household – she besought...saying: "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord – come into my house and abide there!"'

Here, Henry commented:⁶²⁶ "She was baptized, and by that solemn right was admitted a member of the Church of Christ.... With her, her household also was baptized, those of them that were infants – in her right.

"For if 'the root be holy, so are the branches' [Romans 11:16] – and those that were grown up, by her influence and authority. 'She and her household were baptized' by the same rule that Abraham and his household were circumcised, because the seal of the covenant belongs to the covenanters and their seed....

"She desired an opportunity of receiving further instruction. If she might but have them [Paul and Luke *etc.*] for a while in her family, she might hear them daily (Proverbs 8:34)... Those that know something of Christ, cannot but desire to know more – and seek opportunities of increasing their acquaintance with His Gospel."

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In Romans 16:3-5, Paul writes: 'Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have laid down their own necks for my life – unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles! Likewise, greet the church that is in their house!'

Commented Henry:⁶²⁷ "Aquila and Priscilla [were] a famous couple that Paul had a special kindness for.... He sends likewise greetings to the 'church in their house'.... It seems, then, a church in a house is no such absurd thing as some make it to be. Perhaps there was a congregation of Christians that used to meet at their house at stated times.... Then, no doubt it was (like the house of Obed-edom) blessed for the ark's sake.

⁶²⁶ *Ib.*, p. 836.

⁶²⁷ *Ib.*, p. 1010.

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"Others think that the church was no more than a religious, pious, well-governed family that kept up the worship of God. Religion, in the power of it reigning in a family, will turn a house into a church....

"Doubtless it had a good influence upon this – that Priscilla the good wife of the family was so very eminent and forward in religion; so eminent that she is often named first. A virtuous woman that looks well to the ways of her household, may do much toward the advancement of religion in a family [Proverbs 31:10-31].

"When Priscilla and Aquila were at Ephesus, though but sojourners there, yet there also they had a church in their house. First Corinthians 16:19. A truly godly man will be careful to take religion along with him, wherever he goes. When Abraham removed his tent, he renewed his altar. Genesis 13:18" *cf.* 18:18f.

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In Colossians 3:16f & 4:2, Paul enjoins: 'Let the word of Christ keep on dwelling in you richly, in all wisdom! Keep on teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord! ... Keep on doing all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, while giving thanks to God and the Father by Him! ... Fathers, do not keep on provoking your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.... Keep on continuing in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving!'

Here, Henry commented:⁶²⁸ "The Gospel is the word of Christ which is come to us. But that is not enough. It must dwell in us or keep house...in a family..., as a master who has a right to prescribe and direct to all under his roof....

"It must dwell in us richly – not only keep house in our hearts, but keep a good house. Many have the word of Christ dwelling in them; but it dwells in them but poorly."

In First Timothy 2:8f, Paul enjoins: 'I therefore want men to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands!' Matthew Henry commented:⁶²⁹ "Men must pray everywhere.... We must...pray in our families, pray at our meals, pray in the solemn assemblies – whether more public or private."

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⁶²⁸ *Ib.*, p. 1167.

⁶²⁹ *Ib.*, p. 1196.

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In First Timothy 3:5, Paul says: 'If a man does not know how to rule his own house – how shall he take care of the Church of God?' "The families of Ministers," commented Henry,⁶³⁰ "ought to be examples of good to all other families. Ministers must 'have [or keep] their children in subjection'.... It is the duty of Ministers' children to submit to the instructions...given them."

In Second Timothy 1:3f, Paul declares to Timothy: 'I thank God Whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day.... I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice; and I am persuaded in you too.'

Here Henry commented:⁶³¹ "Paul was much in prayer. He prayed night and day. In all his prayers he was mindful of his friends. He particularly prayed for good Ministers. He prayed for Timothy, and had remembrance of him in his prayers night and day. He did this without ceasing...."

"Paul served God from his forefathers, with a pure conscience. It was a comfort to him that he was born in God's house, and was of the seed of those that served God...."

"It was the matter of St. Paul's thanksgiving that Timothy inherited the faith of his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois – and ought to be ours, whenever we see the like. We should rejoice wheresoever we see the grace of God.... 'I rejoiced greatly that I found of your children walking in the truth.' Second John 4."

In Second Timothy 3:14f, Paul commanded Timothy: 'Continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them.... From childhood, you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to keep on making you wise unto salvation.'

Matthew Henry commented:⁶³² "It is a great happiness to know the Holy Scriptures from our childhood.... Children should betimes get the knowledge of the Scriptures. The age of children, is the learning age...."

⁶³⁰ *Ib.*, p. 1197.

⁶³¹ *Ib.*, p. 1208.

⁶³² *Ib.*, pp. 1215f.

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"Those who would get true learning, must get it out of the [Holy] Scriptures.... We must read and search them daily, as the noble Bereans did. Acts 17:11." We must read daily – together with our families!

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In Titus 1:5f, Paul reminds Titus he told him to 'ordain Elders in every city.... If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For an Overseer must be blameless.'

Here Henry commented⁶³³ anent each candidate for the Eldership that "his children" must be "faithful" and "obedient and good – brought up in the true Christian Faith and living according to it, at least as the endeavours of the parents can avail.... Children so faithful and obedient and temperate, will be a good sign of faithfulness and diligence in the parent who has so educated and instructed them."

Titus 2:3f insists that 'the aged women...be in behaviour as becomes holiness.' For Christianity needed and still needs such older women were to be able to 'teach the young women...to love their children [and] to be...chaste keepers at home...[and] obedient to their own husbands.'

Henry here commented:⁶³⁴ "For teaching such things, aged women have often better access than the men.... Therefore they must improve in instructing the young women, especially the young wives. For he speaks of their duty to their husbands and children.

"These young women, the more aged must teach.... Their business is to guide the house, and should give no occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully." In one word, each young woman that is married – is to be dedicated to her calling of "building her house and doing her husband good" as a "chaste keeper...at home."

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In Philemon 1f, Paul writes to 'our dearly-beloved Philemon...[and] to our dear Apphia...and to the church in your house.' Also the runaway slave Onesimus had been a member precisely of that household.

Here, Henry commented⁶³⁵ that "with Philemon, Apphia is joined, probably his yoke-fellow; and having a concern in the domestic affairs, the apostle directs [the

⁶³³ *Ib.*, p. 1222.

⁶³⁴ *Ib.*, p. 1125.

⁶³⁵ *Ib.*, p. 1235.

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epistle] to her likewise.... A kind conjunction there is in domestic matters between husband and wife, whose interests are one.... Affections and actings, must be according....

To those, it is added 'and to the church in your house' – his whole family, in which the worship of God was kept up – so that he had, as it were, a church in his house. Observe – families which generally may be most pious and orderly, may yet have one or other in them impious and wicked. This was the aggravation of Onesimus's sin, that it was where he might and should have learned better. It is likely that he was secret in his misconduct – till his flight discovered him.

"Hearts are unknown but to God, till overt acts discover them. Yet this one evil servant did not hinder Philemon's house from being called and counted a church, for the religious worship and order that were kept up in it.... Such should all families be – nurseries of religion; societies where God is called on, His Word read, and sabbaths observed; and the members instructed in the knowledge of Him and of their duty to Him. Neglect of this is followed with ignorance and all corruption. Wicked families are nurseries for hell, as good ones are for Heaven.... Here, Philemon's house was a church."

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In First Peter 3:7, the Apostle urges husbands to live with their wives in a sensible way. 'You husbands, keep on dwelling with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life – that your prayers be not hindered.'

Commented Matthew Henry:⁶³⁶ "The husband's duty to the wife comes next to be considered. The particulars whereof are: 1, *Cohabitation*, which forbids unnecessary separation.... 2, *Dwelling with the wife according to knowledge*...., as wise and sober men who know the Word of God and their own duty.... 3, *Giving honour to the wife*, giving due respect unto her and maintaining her authority.... She is the weaker vessel by nature and constitution.... But then the wife is, in other and higher respects, equal to her husband.

⁶³⁶ *Ib.*, p. 1319.

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"They are 'heirs together of the grace of life' – of all the blessings of this life, and another.... Therefore they should live peaceably and quietly one with another.... If they do not, their prayers one with another and one for another will be hindered – so that often you will not pray at all; or, if you do, you will pray...without success.... All married people should take care to behave themselves so lovingly and peaceably one to another – that they may not by their broils hinder the success of their prayers!"

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Finally, in Second John (1 & 4), the Apostle and Elder writes to 'the elect lady and her children.' There, John exclaims: 'I rejoiced greatly that I found of your children walking in truth, as we have received a Commandment from the Father.'

Here, Matthew Henry commented:⁶³⁷ "Probably the lady was a widow. She and her children, then, are the principal part of the family.... So this may be styled an 'eco-nomical epistle' [or 'a letter to a household in an *oikos* alias a house']. Families may well be written to and encouraged – and further directed in their domestic love, and order, and duties....

"How good it is to be trained up to early religion! Though religion is not to be founded upon education, yet education may be and often is blessed, and is the way to fortify youth against irreligious infection....

"From the Apostle's joy herein, we may observe that it is pleasant to see children treading in good parents' steps.... They who see this, may well congratulate their parents thereupon – and that, both to excite their thankfulness to God for and to enlarge their comfort in so great a blessing. How happy a lady was this, who had brought forth so many children for Heaven!"

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Summarizing, we saw that Matthew Henry's father, the Presbyterian Rev. Philip Henry – raised his children on daily family worship both morning and evening. When Matthew grew up and married, he himself did likewise.

Matthew then: read to his family from the Old Testament in the morning, and from the New Testament in the evening. On both occasions, he then had them sing from the psalms – and then follow it up with prayer.

He held especially the head of the family responsible to see that daily family worship be practised, and indeed also maintained. Moreover, that was to be done

⁶³⁷ *Ib.*, pp. 1364f.

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every morning and every evening. In the morning, the Henry family commemorated God's goodness in creation. In the evening, its members thanked God for His providence toward them during that day.⁶³⁸

Henry grounded daily family worship in that of the Triune God's Own praise and in that given Him by the angels, even at the time our Earth itself was being shaped. Proverbs 8:30-34 & Job 38:4-7. Among men he traced its practice from Adam, through Cain and Seth, to Enos and Noah. Indeed, after the great flood, he traced its development yet further: through Job, Abram, Isaac and Jacob to Moses.

Henry saw daily family worship re-inforced by the Mosaic Law in general, and especially by the Decalogue in particular. He coupled it also to the daily burnt-offerings every morning and evening, and noted (from Ezekiel 46:4f) that this would and should continue even under the Gospel. For the daily family worship requirements of Deuteronomy 4:9f and 6:6-21, he regarded as permanent.

Matthew Henry regarded the family worship of David, as recorded in Second Samuel 6:10-20 and Psalms 1 & 55 *etc.*, as binding upon Christians. So too the teachings of Proverbs 3:33 & 4:1-20 – and especially that of Zechariah 12:11-14 and Malachi 2:14f & 3:16.

He saw daily family worship commanded in the Lord's Prayer. Matthew 6:9f and Luke 11:2-11f. The examples of household devotions in the homes of Cornelius and Lydia and Aquila, he saw prescribed in Acts 10:2f & 16:14f and in Romans 16:3f. He viewed as normative also Paul's instructions to the Colossians (3:16f & 4:2); his testimony in First Timothy 3:5 and Second Timothy 1:3f & 3:14f; and his advice in Titus 1:5f & 3:3f.

In the Epistle to Philemon, Matthew Henry found evidence for family worship within the "church" in his "house." In First Peter 3:7, he located a requirement that spouses should worship together – in their home. Indeed, in Second John, he saw that even elect ladies should similarly train also their own children.

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In his own book *The Life and Times of Matthew Henry*, Rev. Charles Chapman (M.A.) declared,⁶³⁹ at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the West: "The pressure of business affords but little learned leisure.... Men daily oppressed with the cares and anxieties of life...desire in their retirement or family

⁶³⁸ Compare H.O. Old: *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁶³⁹ Cited in J. Stoughton's *Introductory Essay* (p. x) to Vol. I of the undated Marshall Brothers' ed. of Henry's *Commentary on the Holy Bible*.

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gatherings something that will direct their thoughts at once to...the promise of the Gospel....

"By the exertions of all evangelical Christians, an edition of Matthew Henry's *Commentary* could be issued...at such a low price that the humble village labourer could soon save the amount out of his earnings. Then, what with...thousands of...devoted artisans and agricultural labourers, there would be such an increased interest awakened in the Scriptures – such a diffusion of clear evangelical truth among families – as would be an impassable barrier to the propagators of error."

Now, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, we have already passed the beginning of the Industrial Revolution even in the East. The timeous and massive circulation of translations of Henry's *Commentary* (and/or perhaps even edited abridgments thereof) to the masses in Africa and Asia and South America – and indeed also to the alienated millions in Europe and Australasia and even in North America – could turn the tide of history, and powerfully promote the christianization of the World.

Matthew Henry's daily family worship had always been his own 'house of God and gate of Heaven.' Genesis 4:26; 6:9-18f; 11:9-27f; 18:18f; 25:20f; 26:25f; 28:3-17; 35:2-7f; John 1:51. When yet hardly middle-aged, he himself passed through that gate – and went to glory.

Yet his *Bible Commentary*, based on his daily family worship, is still with us. By practising such household devotions, morning and evening, our own home too will become 'a house of God and a gate of Heaven!'

X

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP FROM A.D. 1700 TILL 2000

The great authority on daily family worship, Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry – was born and raised during the Anti-Puritan Restoration of Charles II. He lived not only to see but also to enjoy the whole reign of that famous Neo-Puritan Presbyterian, King William III, in England (as from 1689).

To William, *The Economy of the Covenants*⁶⁴⁰ was dedicated⁶⁴¹ – by its author, Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Witsius, in 1693. That was perhaps the greatest book ever written on covenant theology. It further deepened the Westminster theology and Puritan piety, and has given a profound stimulus to Calvinism throughout the world – right down to our own century. For this reason, we now say something about its author and its contents – insofar as it bears on the subject of daily family worship.

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Theologians even at that time still often latinized their names. Thus, 'Witsius' is a latinization of a well-known family name in West Friesland.

Herman Witsius was the son of godly parents, the Church Elder Nicolaus Wits of Enkhuysen and his wife Johanna. The latter was the daughter of Rev. Herman Gerhard, who was greatly esteemed by his congregation.

At the birth of Witsius, his parents devoted him to the Ministry of the Word and named him after his grandfather Herman. They prayed that the spirit of the grandfather may not only revive in the grandson, but even be emulated by him.⁶⁴² Psalm 119:99f; Isaiah 59:21f; Malachi 4:5f; Second Timothy 1:5f & 3:14f.

Young Herman was raised as a Dutch Puritan – in purity of worship. The care which his pious parents took of him from his tenderest infancy onward, was never intermitted while he was growing up.⁶⁴³

Three years after his later ordination as a Minister of the Word and Sacraments, Herman married the godly Aletta. She was the daughter of the

⁶⁴⁰H. Witsius: *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man: Comprehending A Complete Body of Divinity*, Escondido Ca.: Den Dulk Christian Foundation, I-II, rep. 1990.

⁶⁴¹*Ib.*, I pp. 3f.

⁶⁴²*Ib.*, pp. 21f.

⁶⁴³*Ib.*, p. 22.

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dedicated Church Elder Wessel van Borkhorn, and his pious wife Martina (of Utrecht).

Aletta was eminently meek. She honoured her husband in a very uncommon way. Their happy marriage lasted for twenty-four years. It produced godly offspring – including their three surviving daughters (Marina, Johanna and Petronella).

The latter dutifully loved their parents. They showed much affection to their father not only before but also and indeed especially after the death of their mother.⁶⁴⁴ Predictably, Herman's happy home life was reflected in his warm covenant theology.

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The covenant, held Dr. Witsius in his *Economy*,⁶⁴⁵ was first erected intratrinitarianly – from all eternity past, and "between God the Father and Christ the Mediator" and indeed 'through the eternal Spirit.' Psalm 2:2-12; Proverbs 8:23f; Zechariah 6:13; John 1:1-18; 17:1-5; Acts 2:33; Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 13:8.

Later, during time, this Triune God entered into a covenant of works – before the fall – with His wise image Adam. Genesis 2:15-17 *cf.* Hosea 6:7 & Ephesians 4:24 & Colossians 3:10.

"What I have just said of the wisdom of the first man," explains Rev. Dr. Witsius,⁶⁴⁶ "ought I think to be extended so far as not to suppose him in the state of innocence ignorant of the mystery of the Trinity." Indeed, also the A.D. 315-403 Church Father "Epiphanius seems to have had this argument in view.... In his *Panarius* (p. 9), he thus writes of Adam: 'He knew God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.... He was a prophet – and knew that the Father said to the Son [and the Spirit], 'Let Us make man!'" Genesis 1:26-28.

"God in the work of creation manifested Himself a Trinity," explained Witsius. "The Father made the world-ages by the Son (Hebrews 1:2). The Holy Ghost cherished the waters, by brooding upon them [Genesis 1:3]."

Each of the Persons within "the whole Trinity addressed Themselves, by mutual consultation, to the creation of man [Genesis 1:26]. It is therefore not credible [that] this mystery should be entirely unknown to the...first parent,

⁶⁴⁴ *Ib.*, p. 31.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ib.*, II:2:1 & II:3:2f.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ib.*, I:2:4f.

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unless we can suppose Adam **ignorant** of His Creator Who was [not just the Father but also] likewise the Son and the Holy Ghost."

Indeed, Witsius continued,⁶⁴⁷ "Adam – as a *man* – was in covenant with God." For Adam was "created as the image of [the Triune] God, and furnished with sufficient abilities to preserve that image...."

"God said to Adam as once to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 29:14f) – 'neither with you only did I make this covenant and this oath; but also with him that is not here with us this day'.... For it was not said to our first parents only, 'increase and multiply!' By virtue of this word, the propagation of mankind is still continued.

"Nor is it true only of Adam [that] 'it is not good that the man should be alone'.... Nor does that conjugal law – 'a man shall therefore leave his father and his mother, and they shall be one flesh' – concern him alone.... Christ still urges" it. Genesis 2:18-24 & Matthew 19:5.

Witsius then dealt with man's vicious violation – and God's alleged abrogation – of the covenant of works between God and Adam together with all of the latter's descendants. Witsius observed⁶⁴⁸ that "Adam transgressed the covenant. Hosea 6:7." Thereafter, all of his descendants – 'like Adam' because 'in Adam' – similarly transgressed that covenant anew.

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Witsius stated:⁶⁴⁹ "Having sufficiently considered the violation of the covenant by sin – let us now enquire whether, and how far, it is made void or abrogated by God Himself.... It is a most destructive heresy to maintain that man, sinful and obnoxious to punishment, is not bound to obedience...."

"If the sinner who deserves punishment was not subject to the Law, he could no longer sin.... Therefore, by one sin, he would [then] set himself free from the danger of farther sinning. For where no law is binding, there is no transgression – no sin, which John defines to be 'the transgression of the Law.' First John 3:4. But nothing can be imagined more absurd, than that man by sin has acquired an impeccability...."

"There is a plain passage, Galatians 5:3, which confirms that even by the promulgation of the new gospel covenant – the breakers of the covenant who are

⁶⁴⁷ *Ib.*, I:2:14.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ib.*, I:8:1.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ib.*, I:9:1f.

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without Christ are not set free from that obligation of the Law which demands perfect obedience....

"Arminius therefore...very basely **refuses**, that God – when man once fell from the state of innocence and became obnoxious to punishment – even of right required obedience of man. As if God had forfeited His right!" See, declared Witsius, how "**basely**" Arminius "refuses" or denies that also fallen man remains "required" to give "obedience" to God!

Witsius then continued:⁶⁵⁰ "We proceed a step farther, to show that man even after the violation of the covenant, continues bound not only to obedience – but to a **perfect** performance of duty. Paul said of those who are without the covenant of grace, Galatians 5:3, 'that they are debtors to do the whole Law.'

"Nor can it be otherwise. For the Law of the covenant, as to the natural precepts, is immutable. It is the transcript of the image of God, which is no less immutable than God Himself....

"The Law therefore **remains** as the **rule** of our **duty** – but **abrogated** [after the **fall**] as to its **federal** nature. **Nor** can it be the **condition** by the **performance** of which [**fallen**] **man** may acquire a **right** to the **reward**." For, although **unfallen** man could **keep** it **perfectly**, yet **fallen** man **cannot**. However, even fallen man is still **obliged** to **try** to keep it perfectly – although only that **infallible** man **Jesus Christ** could and **did** so keep it – and as the **Second Adam**, in our stead!

"This is the Apostle's meaning, Romans 3:31. 'Do we than make void the Law, through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the Law!' ... It will be more proper to treat of these things [later], when we speak of the fruits and effects of the covenant of grace – than [now] when considering the covenant of works, which is on no account abolished except insofar as it has become impossible for man to attain to life by his own personal works."

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Concerning the regeneration of covenant infants, Witsius declared⁶⁵¹ it is possible "that for some time the spirit of the life of Christ may lie [in them] as it were dormant...though [they be] savingly united in Christ.... This is the case with respect to elect and regenerate infants, whose is the Kingdom of God, and who therefore are reckoned among believers and saints....

⁶⁵⁰ *Ib.*, I:9:12f.

⁶⁵¹ *Ib.*, III:6:16f.

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"Moreover, even in those who have received it in their infancy – this spirit of a new life will sometimes exert itself in vital actions as they gradually advance in years.... It has often been observed that in [our] children of five or six years of age – some small sparks of piety and devotion have shone forth in holy longings, ardent little prayers, and in a certain extraordinary tenderness of conscience.... God is pleased, 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, to ordain strength.' Psalm 8:2....

"This principle of spiritual life which had discovered its activity in the most tender childhood (according to and sometime above the age of the person)...grows up, by degrees, with the person.... Our Lord...'increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.' Luke 2:52.... John the Baptizer...'grew and waxed strong in spirit.' Luke 1:80.

"Such persons make continual progress in the way of sanctification – and grow insensibly 'unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' Ephesians 4:13.

"We have an illustrious example of this in Timothy, 'who from a child had known the Holy Scriptures,' Second Timothy 3:15 – and who in his tender youth, to Paul's exceeding joy, had given evident signs of an unfeigned faith with tears of the most tender piety bursting out at times. Second Timothy 1:4-5."

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Witsius went on⁶⁵² to deal with spiritual peace with God – also in its ramifications for Christian families. "No sooner is the man in covenant with God," he explained, than "he becomes the confederate and friend of that great King.... There is also a friendship with all the other friends of God...who mutually help and comfort one another by communion of prayers.... As spiritual peace is the consequence of justification it was a blessing of the Old as well as...the New Testament."

On God's adoption of His children, Witsius stated⁶⁵³ that "Adam seems also to be called 'the son of God.' Luke 3:38.... We become the children of God by 'marriage' with the Lord Jesus. For when we become His spouse, then we pass with Him into His Father's family."

Discussing Genesis 3:15-20, Witsius stated⁶⁵⁴ that "the seed of the woman...is the godly posterity of Eve; namely, the children of the promise who 'are counted

⁶⁵² *Ib.*, III:9:10f.

⁶⁵³ *Ib.*, III:10:7f.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ib.*, IV:1:24f.

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for the seed.' Romans 9:8.... The woman was constituted the mother of those living – by the Word of promise....

"The original of this was not in the woman herself, but in the principal Seed [viz. Christ] Who was to descend from her. This Name therefore contains a confession of Adam's faith – and shows what Adam taught his children!"

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It was Calvinist Protestants from England, France, Holland, Ireland and Scotland who first colonized North America. Most of them brought their daily family worship practices with them. Yet in that regard there was some backsliding. This needed attention – and indeed received it.

Thus, in 1677, the First Church in Dorchester resolved "to reform our families, engaging ourselves to a conscientious care to set up and maintain the worship of God in them – and to walk in our houses with perfect hearts in a faithful discharge of all domestic duties: educating, instructing and charging our children and our household to keep the ways of the Lord." Thus Edmund S. Morgan, in his book *The Puritan Family*.⁶⁵⁵

During the fourth decade of the eighteenth century, Presbyterians from New York to Virginia met together at the Synod of Philadelphia. There, they deliberated⁶⁵⁶ on how "to use some proper means to revive the...power of godliness." *Inter alia*, it was then resolved:

"The Synod do earnestly recommend it to all our Ministers and Members to take particular care about ministerial visiting of families, and press family and secret worship according to the *Directory* – and that they also recommend it to every presbytery at proper seasons to enquire concerning the diligence of each of their Members in such particulars." Thus the *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church in America*.⁶⁵⁷

By the above-mentioned word "*Directory*," it seems the reference is to the Church of Scotland's widely-used 1647 *Directory for Family Worship*. At any rate, right on the very brink of the 1735-43 Great Awakening, the famous Irish Presbyterian Rev. William Tennent – and his American sons Gilbert, William Jr.,

⁶⁵⁵New York: Harper and Row, 1966, p. 140.

⁶⁵⁶*Minutes of the Presbyterian Church in America 1706-1788*, p. 116 (for September 22nd 1733).

⁶⁵⁷*Id.*

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John and Charles – were stressing the Christian home as a teaching and nurturing cell in promoting the revival of religion.⁶⁵⁸

Britain's great evangelist George Whitefield visited America several times between 1738 and 1770. There, in his famous sermon *The Great Duty of Family Religion*, he declared:⁶⁵⁹ "I believe we must forever despair of seeing a primitive spirit of piety revived in the World – until we are so happy to see a revival of primitive family religion.... Every governor of a family...ought to look upon himself as a prophet and therefore – agreeably to such a character – bound to instruct those under his charge in the knowledge of the Word of God."

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However, even then, an individualistic pietism – ultimately to become hostile to the covenantal family as such – was creeping, *via* Moravianism and Wesleyanism, into the more-experiential and less-doctrinal wing of American Presbyterianism. This became obvious in the New Light School, with its antipathy to a certain section of the 1647 Scottish Presbyterian *Directory for Family Worship*.⁶⁶⁰

Here is the part of the 1647 *Directory* frowned upon by the 1743 New Light Synod: "At family worship, a special care is to be had that each family keep by themselves – neither requiring, inviting, nor admitting persons from divers families – unless it be those who are lodged with them, or at meals, or otherwise with them upon some lawful occasion.... Meetings of persons of divers families (except in cases mentioned in these Directions) are to be disapproved, as tending to the hinderance of the religious exercise of each family by itself..., to the rending of the families."⁶⁶¹

In removing the above passage from its own 1743 (per)version of the 1647 *Directory*, the New Light Synod to that extent broke with the family-emphasis of Historic Presbyterianism. At least anent this one particular point, in preference to daily family worship the New School wished to encourage frequent meetings of Moravian-type conventicles – and indeed under the 'spiritual' leadership of those who were neither accredited Ecclesiastical Elders nor Heads of Households.

⁶⁵⁸L. Trinterud: *The Forming of An American Tradition – A Re-examination of Colonial Presbyterianism*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959, pp. 76f.

⁶⁵⁹See *The Godly Family*, Pittsburgh: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993, pp. 32-35.

⁶⁶⁰M.J. Coalter Jr.: *Gilbert Tennent, Son of Thunder – A Case Study of Continental Pietism's Impact on the First Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies*. In *Presbyterian Historical Society's Contributions to the Study of Religion*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1986, No. 18 p. 117.

⁶⁶¹*Subordinate Standards*, p. 323.

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The New Lighters had absorbed also many New England Congregationalists. The latter, by that time, no longer strictly upheld Calvin's Biblical view of the covenant family. Later union between the New Light and the Old Light presbyteries, brought these semi-arminianizing New Light novelties also into the mainstream of American Presbyterianism.

Against these innovations, there were strong protests. Such objections came from French-American Huguenots and Scots-American Presbyterians, and finally also from the great Rev. Dr. Jonathan Edwards.

Large numbers of Huguenots had landed in America in 1700. They brought with them their own blessed practice of family worship thrice daily.⁶⁶²

Then they were followed by many Gaelic-speaking Scots, who settled in southeastern North Carolina. There, without Ministers from 1732 till 1773, they studiously maintained their own orthodox Presbyterianism. Also in America, they did so not only by way of their Celtic isolationism – but especially through their traditional love of family worship.⁶⁶³

Yet, the New Light emphasis expanded – unwittingly undermining Christian family worship. Over the next decades, this would become an avalanche. First, however, it would need to overcome the influential legacy of Edwards.

Fifteen years after the Great Awakening – in his 'Farewell Sermon' – the great Jonathan Edwards declared to his congregation:⁶⁶⁴ "Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ and wholly influenced and governed by His rules.... Family education and order are some of the chief means of grace....

"I have often urged on the heads of families – while I was their pastor – to great painfulness in teaching, warning and directing their children; bringing them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.... Take heed that it be not with any of you as it was with Eli of old who reprov'd his children, but restrained them not; and that, by this means, you do not bring the like curse on your families as he did on his!" See First Samuel 2:12-34 and 4:4-22.

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⁶⁶² E.T. Thompson: *Presbyterians in the South*, Richmond Va.: John Knox Press, 1963, I p. 16.

⁶⁶³ *Ib.*, p. 37 (citing the account of Rev. James Campbell).

⁶⁶⁴ *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974 rep., I p. ccvi.

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With the creation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1787, the American Presbyterian *Directory for Worship* was approved. It not only stated:⁶⁶⁵ "It is the duty of Christians to praise God by singing psalms or hymns publicly in the church as also privately in the family." It also contained a chapter headed 'The Directory for Secret and Family Worship.' That latter provided:⁶⁶⁶

"Besides the public worship in congregations, it is the indispensable duty of each person alone in secret, and of every family by itself in private, to pray to and worship God....

"Family worship, which ought to be performed by every family – ordinarily morning and evening – consists in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and singing praises.... The head of the family, who is to lead in this service, ought to be careful that all members of his household duly attend; and that none withdraw themselves unnecessarily from any part of family worship; and that all refrain from their common business while the Scriptures are read, and gravely attend to the same, no less than when prayer and praise are offered up....

"Let the heads of families be careful to instruct their children and servants in the principles of religion. Every proper opportunity ought to be embraced for such instruction.... We are of the opinion that [especially] the Sabbath evening, after public worship, should sacredly be preserved for this purpose. Therefore we highly disapprove of paying unnecessary private visits on the Lord's day; admitting strangers into the families, except when necessity or charity requires it; or any other practices, whatever plausible pretences may be offered in their favor, if they interfere with the above important and necessary duty."

The latter warning was certainly necessary. For, as previously seen, already the 1743 New Light Synod – with all of its individualistic pietism, had started an ever-increasing trend of encouraging Moravian-type conventicles under the leadership of those who were neither accredited Ecclesiastical Elders nor Heads of Households.

Indeed, although several set prayers were included (at least for a while) in the 1787 American Presbyterian *Directory for Secret and Family Worship* – it was already too late for the Old Lights to maintain their emphasis, even within the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. For a longer collection of

⁶⁶⁵In *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications and Sabbath-School Work, 1908, p. 425.

⁶⁶⁶*Ib.*, pp. 445f.

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model prayers, indeed submitted in the 1787 draft for that denomination – were excised⁶⁶⁷ from its final version of 1788.

This unleashed a rising tide of individualism, which would soon engulf American Calvinism. Thereafter, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that would build the burgeoning Baptists. Such latter growth came largely through the defection of de-presbyterianized pietists – and essentially at the expense of the once-powerful Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

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Yet daily family worship still continued among orthodox Presbyterians in America – especially in the Deep South. Thus, the *Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas* for November 3rd 1796 record⁶⁶⁸ that an order was passed enjoining all heads of families to give religious instruction also to their slaves – and to teach the children of their slaves to learn to read God's Word, the Holy Bible.

Rev. Dr. E.T. Thompson, in his book *Presbyterians in the South*, explained:⁶⁶⁹ "Public worship was supposed to be supplemented by family worship. The standard brought by devout Presbyterians from Scotland and Ireland, was morning and evening prayers – with the singing of David's Psalms and Scriptural readings, and upon the Sabbath careful instruction in the *Shorter Catechism*."

A writer in the *Western Luminary* for January 28th 1829 describes a church in Jefferson County, Mississippi. It was composed of descendants of Scottish Highlanders. Said he: "In almost every dwelling, the family altar has been erected – and all their inmates bow the knee to God."

Frederick Law Olmstead, in his book *The Kingdom of Cotton*, speaks of family worship in the mansions of plantations. There, slaves were included in the household devotions of their owner.⁶⁷⁰ Indeed, L.J. Wilson, in his *History of a Southern Presbyterian Family*, not only claims that not one single member of his family in the last hundred years was not a Christian. More importantly, he attributes this fact – to regular religious instruction of the family, during household devotions.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁷T. Ptacek: *Family Worship*, Greenville S.C.: Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1994, p. 56.

⁶⁶⁸Cited in W.H. Foote: *Sketches of North Carolina*, New York: Robert Carter, 1846, p. 293.

⁶⁶⁹E.T. Thompson's *op. cit.*, I p. 223.

⁶⁷⁰Ptacek's *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁶⁷¹N.d., pp. 13f.

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Lest anyone regard the above as mere 'Southern propaganda' and 'Dixie bias' – hear too the testimony of Rev. Dr. Michael Strieby. He was the 1891 Corresponding Secretary of the American Missionary Association in New York City. In his article on 'Negro Evangelization' in the Schaff-Herzog-Plitt *Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge* (published by Funk & Wagnalls in New York City), the New-Yorker Rev. Dr. Strieby testifies:⁶⁷²

"The Presbyterians...took an early interest in the religious instruction of the slaves. The Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1787 recommended 'to all the Members belonging to their Communion to give those persons who are at present held in servitude – such good education as may prepare them for the better enjoyment of freedom.'

"This action was sanctioned by the General Assembly in 1793.... In 1825, the Assembly noticed 'with pleasure the enlightened attention which had been paid to the religious instruction and evangelization of the unhappy slaves and free people of colour' – and 'especially commend the prudence and zeal combined in this work of mercy by the presbyteries of Charleston, Union, Georgia, Concord, South Alabama, and Mississippi'....

"In the houses of worship of the Whites, provision was made for the Blacks, where they might enjoy the privileges of the sanctuary. Services were held for them on the plantations, and **it was the custom to have [also] household servants at family prayers**. On large plantations, it was not uncommon for Christian masters to employ a Minister to preach stately to their slaves. The Colored Members of the Presbyterian Church in 1860, numbered 13 837." Cf. Genesis 14:13f; 15:2-7; 17:12-27; 18:18-19; 24:1-7; 26:1-5; 35:1-20.

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Nevertheless, family worship had declined in America by the middle of the nineteenth century – particularly in the unitarianizing North. Also the industrial revolution – again chiefly in the North – was taking its toll.

The godly Reverend (and later Princeton Professor) Dr. James Waddell Alexander was the brother of the godly Princeton Professor Rev. Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander. They were both the sons of Princeton's first Professor of Theology, the godly Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander. James W. Alexander was born in 1804. By 1847, he had become Minister of the Word and Sacraments in the historic Duane Street Presbyterian Church in New York City.

⁶⁷²M.E. Strieby: 'Negro Evangelization.' Art. in Schaff-Herzog-Plitt *Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1891, I p. xvi & III p. 1618.

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It was then that he first published his famous book *Thoughts on Family Worship*. He dedicated it: "to my father and my mother; by whose hands I was first led to family worship, and for whose continuance in life and health – at a period in which most sons are bereft of this blessing – I am bound to give thanks."⁶⁷³

To Alexander, family religion was quite central in the lives of New Testament Christians. As he explained:⁶⁷⁴ "It was doubtless in regard to spiritual as well as in regard to temporal things, that 'if any provide not for his own and especially for those of his own household – he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.' First Timothy 5:3. That spirit of social prayer which led disciples to join in supplication or praise (Acts 1:13 & 16:25f), could not but have manifested itself in daily household devotion."

He continued:⁶⁷⁵ "Family worship has a direct and manifest tendency to make religion a matter of everyday interest.... The hour of domestic prayer and praise is also the hour of scriptural instruction. The father has opened God's Word, in the presence of his little flock....

"Perhaps he is but a plain man, living by his labour, unused to schools or libraries – and, like Moses, 'slow of speech and of a slow tongue' [Exodus 4:10]. The Christian householder will feel himself constrained to say: 'I am leading my family in solemn addresses to God! What manner of man should I be!' This undoubtedly has been, in cases innumerable, the direct operation of family worship on the father.... Humble Christians are led by the same comparison to be more circumspect, and to order their ways in such a manner as may edify their dependents."⁶⁷⁶

Moreover: "The daily reading of God's Holy Word, by a parent before his children, is one of the most powerful agencies of a Christian life.... It is a constant dropping – but it wears its mark into the rock. A family thus trained, cannot be ignorant of the Word.... No part of juvenile education is more important."⁶⁷⁷

Once again:⁶⁷⁸ "Where the Scriptures are fully and statedly read in a household day by day, there is the greatest possible safeguard against error.... We maintain with earnestness that the best of all methods for preventing latitudinarian

⁶⁷³ P. iii.

⁶⁷⁴ Pp. 16f.

⁶⁷⁵ P. 36.

⁶⁷⁶ Pp. 48f.

⁶⁷⁷ Pp. 62f.

⁶⁷⁸ Pp. 142f.

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declension, is a perpetual inculcation of the Scriptures – such as is continually taking place in family worship."

In fact:⁶⁷⁹ "Family worship...promotes habits of order. It brings a stated regulation into the house, and gathers the inmates by a fixed law. It sets up a wholesome barrier against wanton irregularity, sloth, and night-wandering. It encourages early hours, thoughtfulness, and affection.... Above all, it adds strength to the principle of subordination and obedience."

Daily family worship also teaches punctuality. Explained Rev. Professor Alexander:⁶⁸⁰ "The time for family worship demands our consideration.... There have been those who have found edification in three hours of prayer: 'Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry out aloud, and He shall hear my voice.' Psalm 55:17 [*cf.* Daniel 6:10 and Acts 3:1 & 10:2f,30].

"That which is most important in regard to the time of family worship, is that it should be *fixed*. We ascribe great value to this particular.... It saves the time of the household; and it tends to that method and punctuality in domestic affairs which is a chief ornament of a Christian house[hold].

"*Morning prayer* should, in our humble judgment, be early in the morning.... We have noted striking advantages in observing family devotion at as early an hour as the whole household can be assembled."

If the family eat together at *noon*, that too is a good time at least to ask for a household blessing at lunch. Explained Alexander: "There is a Christian decorum in resorting to God before we gather around the table of His bounty. The refreshment of food seems to acquire a blessing. 'For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.' First Timothy 4:5....

"*Evening Prayer* is, of course, the closing domestic service.... Some have thought they found an advantage in calling together the family immediately before or immediately after the evening-meal. It is a laudable method.... Only 'let all things be done decently, and in order.' First Corinthians 14:40."

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Now Alexander himself tells us he wrote his book "in a period when the World is every day making new inroads on the Church." Also as a result of the

⁶⁷⁹Pp. 165f.

⁶⁸⁰Pp. 190-92.

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Industrial Revolution in the West, the World had – already even then – "especially invaded the household."⁶⁸¹

Hence, in the mid-nineteenth century, Alexander observed:⁶⁸² "Our Church cannot compare with that of the seventeenth century.... Along with sabbath observance and the catechizing of children, family worship has lost ground.

"There are many heads of families, communicants in our churches, and...some Ruling Elders and Deacons – who maintain no stated daily service of God in their dwellings. It is to awake such to their duty, that this volume has been prepared."

In Alexander's time (perhaps even more than today), urbanized fathers left home early and came home late. However, family worship, once it has been established and is kept up each day, helps schedule even such busy lives.

Said Alexander: "It is good for a family to have a religious motive for rising early.... It is something to have punctuality in the observance of two hours [alias two different periods of time] each day, enforced from the dawn of life.

"Those who may be tempted to put this aside with a smile, should first institute a comparison with regard to these particulars between any two families – in which one worships, and the other worships not.... In the latter will be found a great looseness in domestic life...; evenings without an affectionate rallying of the house; and late hours of retiring, or no fixed hours at all."

Alexander rightly deprecates perfunctory 'family worship' done "in a cold, sluggish, negligent, hurried way.... But in a solemn and affectionate way, we are blessed by it."

Consider, he reminds us, the long-term social effect of this practice so persistently promoted by the great Puritan Richard Baxter at Kidderminster in Scotland. Without either any bombastic bragging on the one hand or any unhumble hyper-humility on the other, Baxter could truthfully declare that at the end of his ministry in Kidderminster:

⁶⁸¹ Pp. 1f.

⁶⁸² *Id.*

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"There was no disorder to be seen in the streets on the Lord's Day. But you might hear a hundred families singing Psalms [and] repeating sermons as you passed through the streets. When I first came there, there was about one family on each street that worshipped God and called on His Name. When I came away, there was not but one on each street that did not profess and practice sincere godliness."⁶⁸³

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Stated Alexander:⁶⁸⁴ "Among the links which connect the existing race with posterity, the most essential is the family.... Divine Providence has seized upon this relation as the channel for conveying down the blessings of religion, as we may observe in numerous rites and institutions. We regard family worship as one of the most important of these....

"It has pleased God to have special regard to the transmission of religion by domestic means. His covenant is from father to son. He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Circumcision was the 'token of the covenant' between Jehovah and His people (Genesis 17:11)....

"Infant baptism, which has come in the place of the ancient initiation, under the enlarged privileges of the Christian Church, has not abandoned the principle but involves the obligation of parents to pray with and for their children, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

"From the beginning of the World, He has dealt with mankind on the family principle. Every covenant has comprised succeeding generations...from Eden to Pentecost. It is breathed in the first promise [Genesis 3:15f]. It beams in the [rain]bow of Ararat [Genesis 6:9-18 & 9:1-9].

"It fills the starry page of Abraham (Genesis 15:5). It is uttered through the fires of Sinai [Exodus 20:4-14]. It is inscribed on the bloody lintel of Egypt [Hebrews 11:28]. It flows in the household baptism of the New Testament [Acts 2:38f; 10:2-48; 16:14f; 16:31f; 18:8; *etc.*]....

"It is remarkable how generally and how widely religion descends in the line of father and son. There is everything to encourage prayer and faithful training, and living hope.... Here is our chief hope for posterity. This kindles an altar of perpetual fire in the house. This lightens our faces when we hold our little ones for the affusion of baptism. This revives our souls when we fold their hands in

⁶⁸³ *Ib.*, as cited in W. Rogers: *Family Worship*, in *The Counsel of Chalcedon* (Atlanta, March & April 1985).

⁶⁸⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 175-82.

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ours, as they kneel beside us. This consecrates the delightful moment, when their lisping words first echo to us the Name of Jesus. This spreads a canopy of promise over the morning and evening group in the tabernacle of prayer....

"It is by the salvation of the children of the Church, more than from all other means, that we hope for the salvation of the World... When the terms of this covenant are by divine power made to take effect by means of Christian education, holy example, and family prayer – the increase is often manifold in that...redoubling proportion which is a law of human growth.

"Thus the tree spreads its boughs, and scatters its fruit. The original blessing does not die in the hands of those who receive it, but is widely communicated. And the [postmillennial] 'latter glory' shall be a period when, as we think, the promise shall be accomplished universally. 'As the days of a tree, are the days of My people – and they shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble. For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their children with them! Isaiah 65:22."

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Some time ago, we referred to the disastrous way in which the industrial revolution impacted upon daily family worship. Whole households were torn apart from one another, at least for a while – as breadwinners left impoverished rural areas and re-located in incipient city slums. Few ever recovered their household happiness after urbanization. Whole armies of children were orphaned – and many more grew up under fragmented parents to whom daily family worship became increasingly alien.

Especially the social-minded Methodists sought to address these issues. In the long term, their hyperindividualism and arminian antagonism to the covenant family as such would only further dechristianize society. However, in the short term, their admirable rescue missions certainly catered and keep on catering to the needs of the neglected. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the rise of the Sunday School Movement.

The Sunday School was totally unknown anywhere in the whole world – until immediately before the French Revolution. It was founded very late in the eighteenth century, by the social reformer Robert Raikes. He was impelled by the Methodist belief that holiness leads to social action, and that all people can be saved. In great compassion, his heart went out particularly to the many neglected children and orphans and street urchins and even bad juvenile delinquents – who were then receiving no religious instruction whatsoever.

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As *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* rightly stated,⁶⁸⁵ Robert Raikes's "failures in prison reform set him thinking.... He reached the conclusion that 'vice is preventable'.... He began a 'new experiment' – as he called it – of 'botanizing in human nature.'

"Going into...the city where many youths were employed in the factories, his heart was touched by the groups of ragged, wretched, cursing children. He knew their parents, homes and habits. None ever entered the house of God. It was useless to appeal to such parents." Indeed, even if some of those children still resided with one or both of their physical parents – they were still, *de facto*, **all** at the very least what we must call 'spiritual orphans.'

In London, a society for establishing Sunday Schools was organized by William Fox in 1785. John Wesley encouraged them. During 1803, the Sunday School Union was founded in Britain.⁶⁸⁶ Sunday Schools soon spread like wildfire, especially throughout the Anglo-Saxon World.

By 1820, the American Sunday School Union had been formed. Sadly, within a decade, lazy church parents were beginning to neglect their daily family worship – and instead, were starting to send their own covenant children off to the weekly Sunday School. So in 1831, that Union was reminded by the social reformer Thomas S. Grimke – that Sunday Schools were aimed at orphans, the poor, and the children of parents who were not church members.⁶⁸⁷

In 1854, the Nashville Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. expressed its joy that "so much is being done to bring the children of the destitute within the reach of the Gospel. This is the original and legitimate field for the Sabbath Schools to occupy." Yet the Synod then further said: "We might also regret that they are not confined more closely to those limits. The result of schools in churches is often, though not necessarily so, that the old plan of catechetical instruction by parents has been almost entirely discontinued."⁶⁸⁸

In 1859, B.M. Smith of Union Seminary in Richmond (Va.) – the later capital city of the Southern Confederacy during the War of Northern Aggression – wrote a very important book on *Family Religion*. Subtitled *The Domestic Relations as*

⁶⁸⁵I-XV, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977, XI p. 153.

⁶⁸⁶Art. *Raikes, Robert (1735-1811)*, in ed. J.D. Douglas's *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974, p. 823.

⁶⁸⁷Ptacek: *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁶⁸⁸Thompson: *op. cit.*, I pp. 465f.

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Regarded *by* *Christian Principles*, Smith declared with circumspect correctness:⁶⁸⁹

"The work of religious instruction in the family derives great aid from well-conducted Sabbath Schools. These schools are not designed to be substitutes for home teaching when parents are capable of performing their duties. That too many misuse them, has led some to depreciate their value....

"Let the fault of parents be checked. Such institutions [as the Sunday School] are too valuable, as supplying the only means of religious instruction to thousands of destitute children, to be discarded – because indolent [and] self-indulgent parents choose to devolve on others their own peculiar duties. But while continuing as zealously as ever to instruct children at home – parents can derive valuable aid to regularity and system...by making the Sabbath School Lesson at least in part the home lesson also."

Since then, however, the weekly Sunday School has all too often – though inadequately so – been regarded as a substitute for daily family worship. Hence the 1922 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States rightly declared⁶⁹⁰ that "in God's plan the school of religion in the home antedated the Sunday School by sixty centuries."

This means that the proper and frequent instruction of children in religion does not derive from the A.D. 1780f methods of Robert Raikes. It derived, six millenia earlier, from the daily family devotions of the first ancestors of the human race – the historical Adam and Eve.

* * * * *

This was fully realized, and indeed energetically taught, by the great Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge – and later also by his famous son Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander Hodge. Both were raised with daily family worship; both taught the necessity of this to their theological students at Princeton; and both derived it – *via* the various standards of the Westminster Assembly – from their first ancestors Adam and Eve.

Charles Hodge (1797-1878) was of Irish descent. His "Aunt Hannah" Hodge of Philadelphia was recognized throughout that city as a mother in Israel. Her father was perhaps the principal founder of the First Presbyterian Church in

⁶⁸⁹ Greenville S.C.: Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1991 rep., pp. 186f.

⁶⁹⁰ Benton Johnson: *From Old to New Agendas – Social Issues in the Twentieth Century*. In ed. Coalter's *The Confessional Mosaic*, p. 219. Cited in Ptacek's *op. cit.*, p. 65.

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Philadelphia, and her mother was the child of a French Huguenot who fled France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Hannah married Deacon Hugh Hodge in 1745. Her pastor, Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green – later to become the President of Princeton – said her character "gave her an influence among her Christian associates perhaps superior to that of any other individual."⁶⁹¹

Hannah's house was the home of several infirm old ladies, whom she supported. The home was also the birthplace of a long-lasting weekly meeting for prayer and religious instruction.⁶⁹²

Deacon Hugh Hodge's brother Andrew fathered fifteen children, including one called Hugh. The latter became a medical doctor, of whom his pastor Dr. Ashbel Green declared: "As a husband, father, brother, friend and citizen, none surpassed him."

Hugh married Mary Blanchard. They produced five children, only two of whom survived. Of the two, Charles Hodge was the younger. He was born just six months before his father died in 1798.

Deeply dedicated to raising her two now-fatherless sons, the widow Mrs. Mary Hodge still found time to become the Directress of an organization known as the 'Female Association for the Relief of Widows and Single Women of Reduced Circumstances.' Her elder surviving son, Hugh, became a Professor of Medicine. He left five sons, all godly. Three of them became Presbyterian Ministers; one of them became a Presbyterian Elder; and the other became an Episcopal Minister. Her younger son, Charles, became the Presbyterian Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton – as too, later, did his son Archibald Alexander Hodge.⁶⁹³

In his own autobiography, written when himself an old man, Charles Hodge preserves a valuable picture of the Christian home in which he and his brother Hugh were raised by their godly widowed mother. "Our early training," he explained,⁶⁹⁴ "was religious. Our mother was a Christian. She took us regularly to church, and carefully drilled us in the *Westminster Catechism*....

⁶⁹¹ A.A. Hodge: *The Life of Charles Hodge, D.D., LL.D.*, London: Nelson, 1881, pp. 1f.

⁶⁹² *Ib.*, pp. 2f.

⁶⁹³ *Ib.*, pp. 5-11.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ib.*, p. 13.

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"There has never been anything remarkable in my religious experience, unless it be that it began very early. I think that in my childhood I came nearer to conforming to the apostle's injunction 'Pray without ceasing!' – than in any other period of my life. As far back as I can remember, I had the habit of thanking God for everything I received, and asking Him for everything I wanted.'

* * * * *

Charles became a Communicant Member of the Presbyterian Church only after serious study, when fully seventeen years of age. On that occasion his mother wrote to his elder brother Hugh:⁶⁹⁵ "An attention to religious duties, you know, has ever been a leading feature in the character of Charles – which has gradually strengthened with his years."

In his twenty-fifth year, Charles married Sarah Bache. The marriage produced eight children.⁶⁹⁶ After the birth of their second girl, Charles wrote to his mother: "Your dear little Mary Elizabeth was baptized...by Dr. Alexander.... We found it easy to take our dear little treasure out, to be consecrated to God in this delightful ordinance...."

"It seems to be the appointed pledge on the part of God, that if we sincerely devote our children *to* Him, and faithfully endeavor to bring them up *for* Him – He will bestow upon them the blessings signified by the ordinance.... Our dear little children we have promised to educate for Heaven – and as God shall enable us, we mean to perform our vows...."

"We feel, therefore, determined – if God shall render us faithful to our purposes – to bring up your dear little grandchildren, as we are sure you would have us do, with the one object supremely in view of fitting them for Heaven. I have great confidence in the effect of religious truth upon the infant mind. Children are so susceptible, their associations are so strong and lasting – that it does not seem strange that the effect of early education should so frequently be felt through[out] life.... If we add to this God's peculiar promises to those who endeavor to bring up a child in the way in which he should go [Proverbs 22:6] – we shall see that there is abundant reason to hope that exertions properly directed, will be crowned with success."

Indeed, after the birth of one of his elder brother's five sons, Charles wrote to Hugh:⁶⁹⁷ "I am glad you were in season to welcome your fourth son into the

⁶⁹⁵ *Ib.*, pp. 94-96 & 367.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 97f.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ib.*, p. 240.

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world.... Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.... Train him up in the right way, and leave the result to God!"

After the death of his own wife Sarah, Charles remarried a godly widow (Mrs. Mary Hunter Stockton). Sarah's son Archibald Alexander Hodge later wrote of his new stepmother *vis-a-vis* her new husband:⁶⁹⁸ "This noble Christian lady supported and brightened all his later life – and assiduously attended him with her tender ministrations until his eyes closed in death. She has been an admirable mother to his children and head of his household, uniting the family and completing the education and training of its younger members in a manner their own mother would not have desired to excel."

To his dear friend Bishop Johns, Charles Hodge wrote⁶⁹⁹ of his new bride Mary Hunter Stockton: "I have known her by sight since she was fifteen years old. For the last six or seven years, she was a sister to Sarah – and therefore to me. She was familiarly known and greatly loved by all my children, who were almost as much at home in her house as in my own. She has come into my family as an old friend, every heart already her own, and we all feel her presence as a token and assurance of God's favor."

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We next look at Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge's eldest son. We mean the famous Presbyterian and later Rev. Professor, Dr. A.A. Hodge (1823-86).

Explained the introduction to the 1958 edition of his famous book *The Confession of Faith*:⁷⁰⁰ "Archibald Alexander Hodge, the eldest child of Charles and Sarah Hodge, was born...in the pleasant little town of Princeton, New Jersey.... Archibald Hodge, the son of one of the greatest Reformed teachers of the age, had thus the untold advantage of being nurtured from his earliest years in an environment of godliness and orthodoxy.

"As is often the case in such circumstances, [A.A.] Hodge could never recall a time when he was not under spiritual impressions.... He and the other children had access to their father at all times. 'If they were sick, he nursed them. If they were well, he played with them. If he were busy, they played about him.'

"Recalling his father's manner at family prayers, he [A.A. Hodge] later wrote: 'He prayed for us all at family prayers; and singly.... With such soul-felt

⁶⁹⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 391f.

⁶⁹⁹ *Id.*, Aug. 27th 1852.

⁷⁰⁰ London: Banner of Truth, 1958, p. vii.

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tenderness [he] taught us to pray, at his knees, that – however bad we were – our hearts all melted to his touch."

When himself an adult, A.A. Hodge wrote his above-mentioned work – which is sub-titled *A Handbook of Christian Doctrine Expounding the Westminster Confession*. There, he expounded also the latter's chapter 21:6 – where it states that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily."

Hodge himself then commented⁷⁰¹ that "the regular worship of God is to be conducted...in the private family.... In the Word read..., God speaks to us.... We worship Him by hearing with reverence, diligent attention, and self-application and obedience. In Prayer and the singing of Praise – we address to God the holy affections, desires and thanksgivings inspired in our hearts by His Holy Spirit."

Hodge then approvingly gave a very valuable quotation. He took it from chapter fifteen of the American Presbyterian *Directory for Worship* – the section there headed *The Directory for Secret and Family Worship*.⁷⁰²

* * * * *

Also the godly Southern Presbyterian, Rev. Professor Dr. B.M. Palmer, authored a famous work on godliness in the home. It is titled: *The Family in its Civil and Churchly Aspects*. There, he wrote⁷⁰³ that even after the fall of our first parents Adam and Eve, there was "piety preserved in the line of Seth, under the denomination of 'the sons of God' [Genesis 4:26 to 6:2] – as distinguished from the ungodly descendants of Cain."

Asked Palmer: "Through what channel was true religion kept alive and transmitted, until that sad commingling of the two lines brought on the enormous wickedness which terminated in the judgment of the flood? Was not the first act of Noah in coming forth from the ark – the resumption of the patriarchal prerogative in offering burnt sacrifices for himself and for his household [Genesis 8:18-22]?"

He went on: "The patriarchal blessing too...and the birthright...which the supple Jacob acquired – was the investiture of the first-born with all the patriarchal privileges...which death conveyed from father to son.... When the Church came to be more distinctly constituted...in the days of Abraham, it was still founded in the house of the patriarch. A covenant was made with him, which included a twofold blessing. 'I will make of thee a great nation,' said Jehovah to

⁷⁰¹ *Ib.*, pp. 279f.

⁷⁰² For the quotation, see our own text above between its nn. 666 & 667.

⁷⁰³ Richmond Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publications, 1876, pp. 203-9, 232-34 and 251f.

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him – 'and in thee shall all the families of the Earth be blessed' [Genesis 12:2-3]....

"Thus, visibly, was the Church set up in the family of Abraham.... The family lies couched as the germ of the Church.... Observe how this is recognized by Peter in the first proclamation of the Gospel after the day of Pentecost, when he says to the Jews – 'the promise is unto you and to your children' [Acts 2:38f]....

"The line of the Church, is through the household.... The ecclesiastical position of the child, shall be determined by that of the parent.... 'The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy' [First Corinthians 7:14]. The faith of either party, determines the status of the offspring....

"The household baptisms in the New Testament proceed upon the same fundamental idea, recognizing the law of birth fixing the fact of church relationship as still unrepealed. It is difficult to see how this cumulative evidence could be stronger than it is – all the more valuable because so incidental – that God designed the family to be the radix of the Church....

"All, therefore, that the word salvation implies...is potentially included in the idea of ADOPTION.... Whoever undertakes the full exposition of the word, finds himself carried around...the doctrines of sovereign election by the Father; of redemption by the Son; of the indwelling of the Spirit – of union with Christ by faith, and of joint-heirship with Him in eternal glory. If the Gospel had any term that is *generic*, in which is logically contained all that constitutes the experience of the Christian – it is ADOPTION....

"The family was constituted, at the beginning, as the matrix in which the language of grace should be cast. Its perfectly-defined relations yielded the conceptions out of which the Gospel frames its terminology. Blot out from the mind all that is associated with the family – and the word 'adoption' becomes an unmeaning cypher which can never be interpreted, for the want of some mediating term.... We find the family, therefore, subserving a churchly purpose....

"From the beginning, the husband was designed as the type of Christ, and the wife a type of the Church, and human marriage a symbol of the sacred espousals between the Lord and His people. If there be a holy shrine upon the Earth – it is the family!" Genesis 1:26-28 & 2:18-24 *cf.* Ephesians 5:25-32 & 6:1-4.

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A knowledge of the background and experience of Australia's own Rev. John Gibson Paton (1804-1907) – sometime Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in

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Victoria, and Pioneer Missionary to Tanna in the New Hebrides alias Vanuatu – would be very helpful at this point. For it is indeed perhaps the most inspiring of all modern accounts anent daily family worship.

Paton was raised amid a very considerable amount of material poverty in Scotland. Yet he had godly parents, who practised daily family worship in their tiny little dwelling out in the countryside just a few miles from a rural village. We now cite at length from his 1897 autobiography *John G. Paton* – subtitled *Missionary to the New Hebrides*. Writes Paton:⁷⁰⁴

"I was born in a cottage.... My father [James Sr.]...was a stocking-manufacturer in a small way.... He and his young wife, Janet Jardine Rogerson, lived on terms of warm personal friendship with the 'gentleman farmer.' So they gave me his son's name: John *Gibson*....

"Amid this wholesome and breezy village life, our dear parents found their home for the long period of forty years. There too were born to them eight additional children – making in all a family of five sons and six daughters....

"Our home consisted of a 'but' and a 'ben' and a mid room' (or chamber called the 'closet').... The 'closet' was a very small compartment between the other two – having room only for a bed, a little table, and a chair – with a diminutive window shedding diminutive light on the scene. This was the sanctuary of that cottage home.

"Thither daily, and oftentime a day – generally after each meal – we saw our father retire and 'shut to the door'.... We children got to understand...that prayers were being poured out there for us – as of old by the High Priest within the veil in the Most Holy Place....

"Never, in temple or cathedral, on mountain or in glen, can I hope to feel that the Lord God is more near, more visibly walking and talking with men – than under that humble cottage roof.... Though everything else in religion were by some unthinkable catastrophe to be swept out of memory or blotted from my understanding, my soul would wander back to those early scenes and shut itself up once again in that sanctuary closet – and, hearing still the echoes of those cries to God, would hurl back all doubt with the victorious appeal, 'He [James Paton Sr.] walked with God; why may not I?'"

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⁷⁰⁴First ed. 1889, London: Banner of Trust Trust, rep. 1965, pp. 3-17.

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John G. Paton continues: "A few notes had better here be given as to our 'forebears' – the kind of stock from which my father and mother sprang. My father's mother, Janet Murray, claimed to be descended from a Galloway family that had fought and suffered for Christ's Crown and Covenant in Scotland's 'killing time' – and was herself a woman of a pronouncedly religious development. Her husband (our grandfather William Paton)...was seasoned by the warm evangelical spirit of his covenanting wife – her lips 'dropping grace.'

"Of their children, two reproduced the disposition of their father and three that of their mother.... John, James and Spiers learned the stocking-manufacturing business of their fathers and also followed their mother's piety – becoming from early teens at once pronounced and consistent disciples of the Lord.

"On the other side, my mother Janet Rogerson had for parents a father [William Rogerson] and mother [Janet Jardine] of the Annandale stock.... While attending some boarding school, she [Janet Jardine] fell devotedly in love with the tall, fair-haired, gallant young blacksmith William Rogerson.... While he was enjoying his honeymoon," his wife Janet's unscrupulous uncles "managed to dispose of all the property of their ward [Janet] – and make good their escape, with the proceeds, to the New World.

"Having heard a rumour of some such sale, our young blacksmith on horseback just reached the scene in time to see the last article – a Family Bible – put up for auction. This he claimed...in name of the heiress.... It was used devoutly by her till her dying day, and was adorned with the record of her own marriage and of the birth of a large and happy family whom bye-and-bye God gave to her.

"Janet Jardine [John G. Paton's grandmother] showed, in her gentler ways, her love of books.... Amongst those who at last wept by her grave, stood (amidst many sons and daughters) her son the Rev. James J. Rogerson."

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John G. Paton continued: "From such a home came our mother, Janet Jardine Rogerson [Jr.] – a bright-hearted, high-spirited, patient-toiling and altogether heroic little woman who for about forty-three years made and kept such a wholesome, independent, God-fearing and self-reliant life for her family of five sons and six daughters as constrains me when I look back on it now...almost to worship her memory....

"She had noticed that a young stocking-maker from the 'Brig End' – James Paton, the son of William and Janet there – was in the habit of stealing alone into

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the quiet wood, book in hand, day after day at certain hours, as if for private study and meditation.

"It was a very excusable curiosity that led the young bright heart of the girl to watch him devoutly reading, and hear him reverently reciting...Ralph Erskine's *Gospel Sonnets* – which he could say by heart sixty years afterwards as he lay on his bed of death....

"Finally, that curiosity awed itself into a holy respect – when she saw him lay aside his broad bonnet, kneel down under the sheltering wings of some tree, and pour out all his soul in daily prayers to God....

"One day, she slipped in quietly, stole away his bonnet, and hung it on a branch near by – while his trance of devotion made him oblivious of all around. Then, from a safe retreat, she watched and enjoyed his perplexity in seeking for and finding it.

"A second day, this was repeated.... Next day, when he came to his accustomed place of prayer, a little card was pinned against the tree just where he knelt, and on it these words – 'She who stole away your bonnet, is ashamed of what she did; she has a great respect for you, and asks you to pray for her that she may become as good a Christian as you.'

"Staring long at that writing, he forgot Ralph Erskine – for one day. Taking down the card, and wondering who the writer could be..., [he] was wondering whether angels had been there during his prayer....

"Suddenly, raising his eyes, he saw...through a lane amongst the trees the passing of another kind of angel, swinging a milk-pail in her hand and merrily singing some snatch of old Scottish song. He knew in that moment, by a divine instinct as infallible as any voice that ever came to seer of old, that she was the angel visitor that had stolen in upon his retreat....

"I am afraid he did pray 'for her' – in more senses than one – that afternoon.... More than a bonnet was very effectually stolen. A good heart and true was there virtually bestowed.... The trust was never regretted on either side, and never betrayed....

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"Somewhere in or about his seventeenth year, my father [James] passed through a crisis of religious experience.... From that day, he openly and very decidedly followed the Lord Jesus.... Family worship had heretofore been held only on Sabbath Day in his father's house. But the young Christian [James], entering into conference with his sympathising mother [Janet Murray Paton], managed to get the household persuaded that there ought to be daily morning and evening prayer and reading of the Bible and holy singing."

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Explained Rev. John G. Paton of his godly father James: "So began, in his seventeenth year, that blessed custom of Family Prayer, morning and evening, which my father practised probably without one single avoidable omission till he lay on his deathbed, seventy-seven years of age....

"Even to the last day of his life, a portion of Scripture was read.... His voice was heard softly joining in the Psalm, and his lips breathed the morning and evening Prayer – falling in sweet benediction on the heads of all his children, far away many of them over all the Earth, but all meeting him there at the Throne of Grace.

"None of us can remember that any day ever passed unhallowed thus. No hurry for market; no rush to business; no arrival of friends or guests; no trouble or sorrow; no joy or excitement – ever prevented at least our kneeling around the family altar, while the High Priest led our prayers to God, and offered himself and his children there....

"Blessed to others, as well as to ourselves, was the light of such example! I have heard that in long after-years the worst woman in the village...(then leading an immoral life but since changed by the grace of God), was known to declare that the only things that kept her from despair and from the hell of the suicide – was when in the dark winter nights she crept close up underneath my father's window and heard him pleading in family worship that God would convert 'the sinner from the error of wicked ways and polish him as a jewel for the Redeemer's crown.'" Cf. Malachi 3:15 to 4:6.

Just hear the testimony of that woman, after her later conversion: 'I felt,' said she, 'that I was a burden on that good man's heart; and I knew that God would not disappoint *him*. That thought kept me out of hell, and at last led me to the only Saviour!'

Explains John G. Paton of his brothers and sisters with whom he was raised in that tiny cottage: "Each of us, from very early days, considered it no penalty but a great joy to go with our father to the church. The four miles were a treat to our

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young spirits. The company by the way[side] was a fresh incitement.... A few other pious men and women of the best evangelical type, went from the same parish to one or other favourite Minister....

"When these God-fearing peasants 'foregathered' in the way to or from the House of God, we youngsters had sometimes rare glimpses of what Christian talk may be and ought to be. They went to the church, full of beautiful expectancy of spirit – their souls were on the outlook for God. They returned from the church, ready and even anxious to exchange ideas as to what they had heard and received of the things of life. I have to bear my testimony that religion was presented to us with a great deal of intellectual freshness, and that it did not repel us but kindled our spiritual interest."

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At family worship in the home, "we had, too, special Bible Readings on the Lord's Day evening – mother and children and visitors reading in turns – with fresh and interesting question, answer and exposition all tending to impress us with the infinite grace of a God of love and mercy in the great gift of His dear Son Jesus our Saviour. The *Shorter Catechism* was gone through, regularly, each answering the question asked – till the whole had been explained, and its foundation in Scripture shown by the proof-texts adduced.

"It has been an amazing thing to me, occasionally to meet with men who blamed this 'catechising' for giving them a distaste to religion. Every one in all our circle, thanks and feels exactly the opposite. It laid the solid rock-foundations of our religious life. After-years have given to these questions and their answers a deeper or a modified meaning. But none of us have ever once even dreamed of wishing that we had been otherwise trained. Of course, if the parents are not devout, sincere and affectionate – if the whole affair on both sides is taskwork, or worse, hypocritical and false – results must be very different indeed.

"Oh, I can remember those happy Sabbath evenings.... How my father would parade across and across our flag-floor, telling over the substance of the day's sermons to our dear mother who, because of the great distance" of her home four miles from the church building, "got very seldom indeed to the church – but gladly embraced every chance, when there was prospect or promise of a 'lift' either way from some friendly gig. How he would entice us to help him to recall some idea or other, praising us when we got the length of 'taking notes' and reading them over on our return.

"How he would turn the talk ever so naturally to some Bible story or some martyr reminiscence, or some happy allusion to the *Pilgrim's Progress*! And then it was quite a contest [as to] which of us would get [to] reading aloud – while all

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the rest listened, and father added here and there a happy thought or illustration or anecdote.

"Others must write and say what they will, and as they feel. But so must I. There were eleven of us brought up in a home like that. And never one of the eleven, boy or girl, man or woman, has been heard or ever will be heard, saying that Sabbath was dull or wearisome for us – or suggesting that we have heard of or seen any way more likely than that for making the Day of the Lord bright and blessed alike for parents and for children. But God help the homes where these things are done by force and not by love!"

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After being trained by his denomination and then ordained by his presbytery as a Foreign Missionary, the Rev. John G. Paton got married. Doubtless he then immediately erected in his own home the household altar of daily domestic devotions he had known from childhood, and which his parents before him had practised together ever since their marriage.

Paton then proceeded to the mission field at Tanna in the New Hebrides alias Vanuatu – a group of islands in the South Pacific some eleven hundred miles northeast of Brisbane in Australia. However, shortly after that, he tragically lost both his wife and their baby son very soon after childbirth.

Continues Paton:⁷⁰⁵ "My dear young wife, Mary Ann Robson," was the "daughter of Peter Robson Esquire – a well-known and highly-esteemed gentleman at Coldstream on the Borders." She "and I were landed on Tanna on the 5th November 1858, in excellent health and full of all tender and holy hopes.

"On the 12th February 1859, she was confined of a son. For two days or so, both mother and child seemed to prosper, and our island-exile thrilled with joy.

"But the greatest of sorrows was treading hard upon the heels of that joy. My darling's strength showed no signs of rallying. She had an attack of ague a few days before her confinement. On the third day or so thereafter, it returned; and attacked her every second day with increasing severity for a fortnight. Diarrhoea ensued, and symptoms of pneumonia, with slight delirium at intervals. And then, in a moment – altogether unexpectedly – she died on the 3rd March.

"To crown my sorrow, and complete my loneliness, the dear baby boy whom we had named after her father Peter Robert Robson, was taken from me after one week's sickness on 20th March. Let those who have ever passed through any

⁷⁰⁵ *Ib.*, pp. 79f.

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similar darkness as of midnight, feel for me! As for all others, it would be more than vain to try to paint my sorrows....

"Stunned by that dreadful loss in entering upon this field of labour to which the Lord had Himself so evidently led me, my reason seemed for a time almost to give way.... But I was never altogether forsaken. The ever-merciful Lord sustained me, to lay the precious dust of my beloved ones in the same quiet grave dug for them close by at the end of the house....

"I built the grave round and round with coral blocks; and covered the top with beautiful white coral, broken small as gravel. And that spot became my sacred and much-frequented shrine, during all the following months and years when I laboured on for the salvation of these savage islands amidst difficulties, dangers, and deaths. Whensoever Tanna turns to the Lord and is won for Christ, men in after-days will find the memory of that spot still green – where with ceaseless prayers and tears I claimed that land for God in which I had 'buried my dead' with faith and hope." Compare: Genesis 35:1-20.

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Mercifully, however, there is a happy sequel to this sad history of Rev. John G. Paton's short-lived daily family worship with his wife Mary Ann and their baby son Peter Robert. Six years later – after spending some little time in Australia – he met Margaret Whitecross, whom our widower soon thereafter married. Wrote he:⁷⁰⁶

"The dear Lord had brought to me one prepared – all unknown to either of us – by special culture, by godly training, by many gifts and accomplishments, and even by family associations, to share my lot in the New Hebrides. Her brother had been an honoured Missionary in the Foreign Field, and had fallen asleep while the dew of youth was yet upon him.

"Her sister was the wife of a devoted Minister of our Church in Adelaide [South Australia], both she and her husband being zealous promoters of our work.... Her father had left behind him...those still popular books, *Whitecross's Anecdotes*, illustrative of the *Shorter Catechism* and of the Holy Scriptures....

"In 1864, I was married to Margaret Whitecross, and God spares us to each other still [1897]. And the family which He has been pleased in His love to grant unto us, we have dedicated to His service – with the prayer and hope that He may use every one of them in spreading the Gospel throughout the Heathen World."

⁷⁰⁶ *Ib.*, p. 285.

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Soon after this, John G. Paton – together with his brothers and sisters – visited their slowly-ailing parents James Paton Sr. and his wife Janet Jardine Rogerson Paton. Of this, here is John G. Paton's account:⁷⁰⁷ "My last scene in Scotland was kneeling at the family altar...while my venerable father, with his high-priestly locks of snow-white hair streaming over his shoulders, commended us once again to 'the care and keeping of the Lord God of the families of Israel'....

"I knew to a certainty that when we rose from our knees and said farewell, our eyes would never meet again till they were flooded with the lights of the Resurrection Day. But he and my darling mother gave us away once again with a free heart...to the service of our common Lord and to the salvation of the Heathen....

"My mother, ever beloved, 'fell on sleep'...in 1865; and my 'priest-like father' passed peacefully and joyfully into the presence of his Lord in 1868 – both cradled and cherished to the last in the arms of their own affectionate children, and both in the assured hope of a blessed immortality.... All their sons and daughters firmly expect to meet them again in the Home prepared by their blessed Saviour."

* * * * *

Paton's links with Australia now became even greater. As he himself wrote:⁷⁰⁸ "My dear friend [Rev.] Dr. J. Dunmore Lang, well acquainted with the resources of all the churches, was our judicious counsellor. We proposed that [for the missionary work in the New Hebrides] Victoria should raise 500 pounds; New South Wales and New Zealand, two hundred pounds each; Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia, one hundred pounds each; and two hundred and fifty pounds each from Nova Scotia and Scotland....

"I visited and addressed almost every Presbyterian Congregation and Sabbath School in New South Wales and Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.... At the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in 1866, I was adopted...as the first Missionary from the Presbyterian Churches of Australia to the New Hebrides."

Back in the islands of Vanuatu again, Rev. Paton together with his wife soon erected an orphanage. He recorded⁷⁰⁹ how the pagan chief "Namakei brought his little daughter, his only child, the queen of her race, called Litsi Sore [alias 'Litsi

⁷⁰⁷ *Ib.*, pp. 286f.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 304f.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 330f.

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the Great'], and said: 'I want to leave my Litsi with you. I want you to train her for Jesus!'

"She was a very intelligent child...and soon became quite a help to Mrs. Paton. On seeing his niece dressed and so smart-looking, the old chief's only brother – the 'sacred man' [or witchdoctor] that had attempted to shoot me – also brought his child Litsi Sisi [alias 'Litsi the Little'] to be trained like her cousin. The mothers of both were dead.

"The children reported all they saw and all we taught them, and so their fathers became more deeply interested in our work.... The news of the Gospel spread far and wide. Soon we had all the orphans committed to us whose guardians were willing to part with them.... Our home became literally 'the School of Christ' – the boys growing up to help all my plans, and the girls to help my wife and to be civilized and trained by her, and many of them developing into devoted Teachers and Evangelists."

Paton added:⁷¹⁰ "I may mention how Namakei's wife was won. The old lady positively shuddered at coming near the Mission House, and dreaded being taught anything.

"One day, she was induced to draw near the door.... Manifestly charmed, she drew nearer and nearer, and drank in the music [of the family praise] as it were at every pore of her being. At last she ran off, and we thought it was with fright. But it was to call together all the women and girls from her village....

"She returned with them all at her heels. They listened with dancing eyes. And ever after, the sound of a hymn...made them flock freely to class or meeting.

"Being myself as nearly as possible destitute of the power of singing, all my work would have been impaired and sadly hindered, and the joyous side of the Worship and Service of Jehovah could not have been presented to the natives – but for the gift bestowed by the Lord on my dear wife. She led our songs of praise, both in the family and in the church, and that was the avenue by which the New Religion winged its way into the heart of cannibal and savage....

"Nasi, a bad Tannese chief living on Aniwa" – recorded Paton – "had a quarrel with Mungaw...and threatened to shoot him. One night after family worship...he poured out his soul in faith and love to the Lord."

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⁷¹⁰ *Ib.*, pp. 362f & 410.

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Missionary Rev. John G. Paton went on:⁷¹¹ "On the 28th October, 1885, I sailed for Melbourne.... The Church and people of my own beloved Victoria gave me a right joyful welcome.... During my absence at the Islands [of Vanuatu]..., they [the Commissioners at the Presbyterian Church of Victoria] had unanimously elected me Moderator of their Supreme Court and called me back to fill that highest chair of honour in the Presbyterian Church.

"God is my witness how very little any or all of these things in themselves ever have been coveted by me. But...when they have come in my way, I have embraced them with a single desire thereby to promote the Church's interest in that cause to which my whole life and all my opportunities are consecrated – the conversion of the Heathen World....

"The General Assembly of Victoria appointed the Rev. Professor Rentoul..., the Rev. Jas. M'Gaw, and myself to represent them at the Pan-Presbyterian Council to be held at Toronto in September 1892. And thus was I altogether unexpectedly launched on what proved to be the biggest of all my missionary journeys....

"With my Fellow-Deputies, and accompanied so far on the journey by my wife and our beloved daughter, we sailed from Sydney for San Francisco.... On 2nd September we arrived...after a delightful voyage.

"The society on board was most congenial. We had happy daily religious services" – even while sailing, on the ship.

For even while travelling, Rev. John G. Paton continued with daily family worship. He had known it in his father's cottage, ever since he was born. He himself had led in it, ever since his marriage. Even in their Mission Home back in Vanuatu, Rev. Paton and his wife had instructed the children of the island chiefs in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, also Mrs. Margaret Paton had taught them how to sing praises to God.

From San Francisco, Rev. Paton went on to preach in North America. There, he addressed the Pan-Presbyterian Council in Toronto; accompanied Rev. Professor Dr. Hodge; preached before the then-outgoing U.S. [Presbyterian] President Benjamin Harrison; and later, together with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., met the then-incoming U.S. President Grover Cleveland⁷¹² (himself the son of a Presbyterian Minister).

⁷¹¹*Ib.*, pp. 440 & 450f.

⁷¹²*Ib.*, pp. 454-59f.

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Of President and Mrs. Cleveland, Paton wrote:⁷¹³ "They invited me to lunch at the White House, privately, that they might question me freely regarding the [Vanuatu] Islanders and our work. They both seemed to me to be genuine followers of the Saviour, and sincerely interested in the salvation of the Heathen World."

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It should be pointed out that John G. Paton was by no means the only child of James Paton who grew up to love the Lord. So too did the rest of the latter's sons and daughters.⁷¹⁴

Three of his five sons became Ministers – John,⁷¹⁵ Walter,⁷¹⁶ and James Jr.⁷¹⁷ Indeed, the latter not only edited⁷¹⁸ John G. Paton's autobiography. Even more significantly, he penned the following poem⁷¹⁹ about the daily family worship which had enriched all eleven children while growing up in the tiny cottage of their own beloved father:

"A white-souled peasant of the olden time,
God-freighted, angel-guarded,
here lived and made a poor man's life sublime....

"His fresh young heart, inspired by mother's prayers
Godward and Christward gladly
saw and began to mount those Bethel Stairs....

"From early teens far past three-score-and-ten
for God he hungered, thirsting.
The God-glow on his face attracted men,
and children gazed and smiled as if again
Christ's eyes were on them bursting....

⁷¹³ *Ib.*, p. 460.

⁷¹⁴ *Ib.*, p. 502.

⁷¹⁵ *Ib.*, p. 51.

⁷¹⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 15 & 51 & 59 & 520.

⁷¹⁷ *Ib.*, pp. 501 & 519.

⁷¹⁸ *Ib.*, pp. v-vi.

⁷¹⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 501-3.

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"There sons and daughters flourished, thence went forth
and far and near were scattered.

But morn and even by that altar hearth
he met them – gather in from all the Earth –
there distance nothing mattered....

"O white-souled peasant of the olden time,
I thank God for thy story!
Memories of thee like bells of Christmas chime,
and cheer our souls unfalteringly to climb
the stairs that lead to glory!"

* * * * *

We now take a look at South Africa's greatest man of God, Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray Jr. (1828-1917). He frequently itinerated, and was repeatedly elected Moderator of the National General Assembly of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

Dr. Murray was the author of more than two hundred forty publications. Yet he always found time for daily family worship, whenever at home. He himself had grown up that way. The latter is plain from the little volume *Unto Children's Children* – written by Dr. Andrew Murray's own sister, Mrs. Maria Murray Neethling.

Maria wrote that their father, Rev. Andrew Murray Sr., was himself the happy father of sixteen children – eleven of whom survived their childhood. The eldest, John, later became Professor of Theology at the Dutch Reformed Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch.

Andrew Jr., the second child, was later to become the great South African Revivalist. Maria herself was the fourth child. Also the ninth, George – just like his brothers John and Andrew – later became a Dutch Reformed Minister.

So too did his other brothers Charles and William. Indeed, fully five of Andrew Murray Sr.'s six sons themselves became Ministers – and fully four of his five daughters married Ministers.

Daughter Maria's account of her godly parents, Rev. Andrew Murray Sr. and his wife Maria Susanna Magdalena Stegmann Murray, is indeed insightful. Their daughter Maria first described her father – an immigrant from a godly home in Scotland. Then she described her mother, who was herself raised in a godly home in South Africa.

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Wrote Maria Murray Neethling⁷²⁰ of her father Rev. Andrew Murray Sr.: "How happy he was...only his children, who grew up in the presence of that loving intercourse, can testify.... The chief characteristic of the household, was reverence.

"We revered God's Name and God's Day and God's Word. The wife revered her husband; the children revered their parents; the servants revered their master and mistress.

"The children were trained in the ways of the Lord.... It was almost curious to see the reverence with which the young men [John and Andrew Jr.], after years of study in Europe, and themselves Ministers, would bow to their father's decision in every matter where they had asked his advice....

"Our father's conversations with his children were very instructive... Many words of Scripture became engraven on the hearts of the children, through hearing their father repeat them with great feeling and emphasis.

"Indeed, he has left them to us as a most precious legacy. The Word of Christ did indeed dwell in him richly, and he taught and admonished us in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in his heart unto the Lord." Colossians 3:16 to 4:2.

"When our father was [away] from home, Mama took upon herself the task of hearing the boys repeat their lessons.... On Sunday, she taught us the *Kort Begrip* [alias the *Compendium of the Heidelberg Catechism*]. It is sweet to recall those Sundays.... Children now would perhaps think it a weariness. Yet we cannot remember that we as children ever did....

"Family worship, night and morning, was never omitted. The 'hour' of the first, and the last stage, was spend in singing.... We possessed the Dutch *Psalms and Hymns*, the Scotch *Paraphrases*, the *Cottage Hymns*, and the *Olney Hymns*. And, best of all, a little stock stored in the memory of what were called...*Slave Hymns* – compiled for the use of native [Coloured] congregations – which were so simple and sweet that they were loved the most of all."

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Of Rev. Andrew Murray Sr.'s eleven children who survived, all served the Lord. They subsequently became parents of children some of whom yet later

⁷²⁰M. N(eethling). For private circulation only. Pp. 12 *sqq.* Cited in Rev. Prof. Dr. J. du Plessis's *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa*, London: Marshall Bros., 1919, pp. 25-32.

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themselves became Ministers, or married Ministers. At least four became the authors of Christian books.

The eldest, Rev. Professor John Murray, was himself the father of some thirteen godly children. One of them became a Minister; and four married Ministers. John Murray wrote *The Children's Bible*, *The People's Reading Book*, *The People's Preacher*, *The Family Altar*, *Home Readings*, *The Church in the Home*, *The Home Book for Afrikaans Families*, and *The Family Worship Book*.

Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray Jr., the second eldest South African son of the Scot Rev. Andrew Murray (Sr.), was himself the father of some eleven godly children – eight of whom survived childhood. He himself put out some 240 publications, which are listed in full at the back of our other writing, *Holy Spirit Harvests*. Of particular relevance to our present thesis or dissertation, are his works: *Jesus the Friend of Children*, *How to Raise Your Children for Christ*, *Hymns of Life and Service*, and *The Home Life*.

The fourth child of Rev. Andrew Murray Sr., Maria – who wrote *inter alia* the biography *Unto Children's Children* – herself married a Minister. They produced twelve godly children, four of whom became Ministers and another of whom married a Minister.

Another child, Charles Murray, became a Minister and married the daughter of a Missionary. They produced fourteen godly children – two of whom became Ministers, two of whom became Missionaries, one of whom married a Minister, and another of whom became the mother-in-law of a Professor in Systematic Theology (Dr. E.E. van Rooyen). Rev. Charles Murray was the chief author of *The Children's Harp* – and was thus also the 'father' of that work's successor, the old *Hallelujah Hymn Book*.

* * * * *

Also the ninth child of Rev. Andrew Murray Sr., Rev. George Murray – himself the father of sixteen godly children, four of whom became Ministers and three of whom married Ministers – authored a number of books. These include his *Prayers for Christian Households*, and his *The Christian Home*.

In the latter, George wrote that "the children were taught since infancy that to be a servant of the Lord is the highest honour on Earth for any human being.... The highest service to which a creature can dedicate himself, is the glorification of the Name of the Creator, and especially the promulgation of the love of the Heavenly Father."

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Further, the covenant-raised George Murray advised his readers: "From the very beginning – erect the family altar! At the family altar, we bring to the Lord our praises and thanksgivings – all our needs. Our servants, our guests, and...our children, participate in the blessing of the family prayer.

"Moses says of the Law of God: 'Speak about it with your children, whenever you rise up and lie down!' And what better opportunity – than at morning and evening family worship! It is also a public profession that we and our household want to serve the Lord. Do not neglect it when guests are present! Do what our fathers did! Even when Jew and Greek were in their home – the Word was read!"⁷²¹

For the sake of completeness, we would also mention that Rev. Andrew Murray Sr.'s daughter Jemima married a Minister, and produced eleven godly children. Of the nine who survived, three became Ministers and one married a Minister.

Finally, it is of some significance that also Rev. Andrew Murray Sr.'s daughter Isabella married a Minister. She produced twelve godly children, two of whom became Ministers, and another of whom later raised three future Ministers. Also Rev. Andrew Murray Sr.'s remaining daughter Elizabeth married a Minister, and produced three godly daughters.

It is well-known that America's greatest theologian, the godly Rev. Dr. Jonathan Edwards, practised regular family worship – and that his descendants thereafter faithfully served God for many decades. As seen above, the same should also be said about the father of South Africa's greatest man of God, Rev. Andrew Murray Sr.

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Rev. Andrew Murray Sr.'s best-known son – the famous Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray (Jr.) – married the godly Emma Rutherford. Following in his father's footsteps, also Andrew Jr. erected a similar kind of family altar. Of this, Andrew Jr.'s biographer Rev. Professor Dr. J. du Plessis wrote:

"In his wife, Mr. [Andrew Jr.] Murray possessed a true life-partner – an affectionate wife, a faithful mother.... When they came to Wellington in 1871, their children numbered nine....

"In 1873, another son, the last of the family, was born. Owing to the father's prolonged absence from home on evangelistic errands, the training of these

⁷²¹ Cape Town: South African Bible Assoc., 1921, pp. 8,11,12,31.

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children devolved to a large extent upon Mrs. Murray. And she acquitted herself of her task with exemplary devotion, earning the lasting gratitude and deep affection of all her sons and daughters.

"As to the harmonious and affectionate relationship which existed between Mr. Murray and his wife, we have the testimony of Frederick Kolbe." Kolbe was the son of a Congregationalist Minister. For a while, he lodged with Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Murray. Afterward, he was destined to become the famous Roman Catholic Prelate, Monseigneur Dr. Frederick Kolbe.

Before Kolbe's conversion to Romanism, Professor du Plessis explains, Kolbe lodged with the Murrays and "was for some time an inmate of their home." Dr. Kolbe later wrote that there was in Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray "never some irritation with his wife, some unevenness towards his children.... I never knew him thrown off his balance.... He was solid gold, all through!"

Continued Professor du Plessis: "Eight children of Andrew and Emma Murray – four daughters and four sons – arrived at maturity.... The Murray family forms a well-defined clan in South Africa. This is due, in large part, to Mr. Murray's endeavours to bind the various members together in affection, in mutual esteem, and in the service and love of God."

Four of Dr. Andrew Murray's eight children followed church careers. His daughter Emma Maria became the head of the Dutch Reformed Church's Magdalena Home for Unwed Mothers in Cape Town. His daughter Mary Ellen went to the Mission Field. His son John Neethling was first a Missionary and then a Military Chaplain. His son Charles Hugo became a Foreign Missionary first in Malawi and then in Botswana – and later a Minister back home in South Africa.

When an old man, the 'patriarch' Dr. Andrew Murray Jr. once held a clan or family gathering of sixty-eight Murray's – at Kalk Bay, in 1906. There, Dr. Murray said: "God, even our own God, shall bless us! God shall bless us – and all the ends of the Earth shall fear Him!"

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Wrote one of his nephews then present: "Andrew then requested all the children to stand, while in simple language he explained to them the reason which had brought us to Kalk Bay that day. It was that we might thank God for the past, and unite in the resolution to love Him and love each other better in the future.... Of all Papa Murray's grandchildren, there was not one of whom we had reason to be ashamed. The most of them were serving God in various capacities, many as ordained Ministers of the Gospel."⁷²²

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In our very first chapter, we gave an extended citation on prayer in the life of Adam and his household (as the first human family) – from Dr. Andrew Murray's famous book *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. In terms of the Lord's Prayer taught us by Jesus Christ Himself, Murray implicitly regarded Adam as the bread-winner of his family – especially when his children, such as Abel and Seth, were still tiny. Indeed, Murray also regarded even the household of Adam – the federal head of the entire human race – as having held daily devotions to Jehovah.

Wrote Dr. Andrew Murray:⁷²³ "Our Heavenly Teacher [in Matthew 6:11] has given us the very words we are to take with us, as we draw near to our Father.... 'Give us this day our daily bread!' When first the child has yielded himself to the Father" as a son of God (Genesis 1:27f cf. Luke 3:38) – "he has full liberty to ask for his daily bread" in his daily prayers with, and for, his family.

Murray rightly links the above to the tasks of mankind as such – even before the fall. For Adam was not merely the prayerful bread-winner of his household, but also the federal head of his family as well as of the entire human race. Thus even the whole of mankind – as the image of God – needed to reflect God's glory, by worshipping Him also at daily household devotions.

"In man himself," explained Murray, "the image he bears decides his destiny.... Prayer is part of the wondrous likeness he bears to his divine origin.... Man's destiny appears clearly from God's language at creation. It was to fill, to subdue, to have dominion over the Earth – and all in it!" Genesis 1:26f.

"As God's representative, man was to have ruled.... On his advice and at his request, Heaven was to have bestowed its blessing on Earth. His prayer was to have been the...natural channel in which the intercourse between the King in Heaven and His faithful servant man as lord of this Earth was to have been

⁷²² *Op. cit.* (compare n. 475), pp. 485-91.

⁷²³ See n. 29 above.

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maintained. The destinies of the World were given into the power of the wishes, the will, the prayer of man.

"What sin destroyed, grace has restored. What the first Adam lost, the Second has won back. In Christ, man regains his original position – and the Church, abiding in Christ, inherits the promise....

"Church of the living God, your calling is higher and holier than you know! Through your members, as kings and priests unto God, would God rule the World. Their prayers bestow and withhold the blessings of Heaven.

"In His elect who are not just content to be saved themselves, but who yield themselves wholly – [so] that through them, even as through the Son, the Father may fulfil all His glorious counsel – in these His elect who cry out unto Him day and night, God would prove how wonderful man's original destiny was.... Man was created, and has now again been redeemed – to pray; and, by his prayer, to have dominion.

"Lord! What is man, that Thou art mindful of him...? For Thou hast...crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet. O Lord, our Lord! How excellent is Thy Name in all the Earth!" Psalm 8:2-9 *cf.* Matthew 21:15f & Genesis 1:26-28.

Murray fully grasped the 'daily family worship' implications of man's tasks both before and after the fall. Man is a priest. Even fallen man, restored in Christ, is to be the Adam-like priest of his family also at daily household devotions. Indeed, also *thereby* man is to dominate the Earth!

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Dr. Andrew Murray supported family worship especially from Genesis 18:19. There, God Himself says: 'I know [Abraham,] 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.'

In his famous book *How to Raise Your Children for Christ*, Murray promoted an excellent discussion of this statement. There, he explained:⁷²⁴ "If Abraham was to be blessed and his seed with him, and all nations again in his seed, it was only thus – he must, as a faithful parent, pass on to others what he himself knew of God. It is only as the children become partakers of the parent's spirit, that they can share his blessing....

⁷²⁴Minneapolis: Bethany, 1975 ed., pp. 45-47.

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"The words of the text are most remarkable: 'I know (Abraham) – [so] that he will command his children and his home.' It was with this very purpose that God had chosen him, and revealed Himself.

"God Himself was the security that His Own purposes should be carried out. And so every believing parent has, in the very fact of his being taken into this relation with God, the guarantee that God will give the grace of faithfulness to prepare for the blessing as well as the reward upon it....

"The spirit of modern so-called liberty has penetrated even into our family life.... There are parents who – some from a mistaken view of duty; some from want of thought as to their sacred calling; some from love of ease – have no place for such a word as 'command.' They have not seen the heavenly harmony between authority and love, between obedience and liberty!

"Parents are more than friends and advisers. They have been clothed by God with a holy authority, to be exercised in leading their children in the way of the Lord. There is an age when the will of the child is to a great extent in their hands – and when the quiet, loving exercise of that authority will have mighty influence."

Needless to say, Murray further argued that Abraham was not only the one in whom all **families** of the Earth were to be blessed, but also the father of all **believers**. Genesis 12:3 *cf.* Romans 4:11. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.... And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:27-29 *cf.* 3:8 & 3:16-18.

* * * * *

Describing the parent and his son at the Passover Feast of Exodus 12:26f, Murray pointed out, with emphasis: "Please observe further – this parent has been constituted and accepted as God's appointed minister in the redemption of the child. This gives an increased fitness for his work as instructor of the child.... In sprinkling the blood upon the door of his house, he saved his child too.... He was honoured to act with God on behalf of the child."⁷²⁵

Turning to Deuteronomy 6:1-7, Murray explained: "Parental instruction must be from the heart! ... The parental instruction must likewise be diligent and earnest! ... The parental instruction must be persevering and continuous! 'Thou shalt teach them [God's words] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them

⁷²⁵ *Ib.*, p. 65.

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when thou sittest in thine house..., and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up!"⁷²⁶

Next follows a picture of Murray's own consecrated home. Said Joshua (24:15) – 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!' Explained Dr. Murray: "Joshua is to us here the very model of a godly parent, and in him we can see what parental religion ought to be.

"Let it be a **personal** religion! 'As for **me** and my house.' He began with himself.... But let yours be, as distinctly, a **family** religion! Take a stand for all who belong to you: 'As for me and **my house**, we will serve the Lord!' ... Then let yours be a **confessed** religion [First Timothy 6:12f]! ... Joshua witnessed this good confession: 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve! ... As for me and my house, **we will serve** the Lord!'"⁷²⁷

'Feed My **lambs**!' – says Christ, in John 21:15. Jesus, explained Murray, is here "reminding us of the great care necessary for our children.... Jesus will do His work of converting and saving and blessing men." But alas! "How little we have understood the admonition to feed the lambs!

The Lord Jesus, continued Murray, "says more. He says: '**Feed My lambs**!' For of such is the Kingdom.... The children's great need is here set before us. Food is the condition for growth.... If the spirit feeds, through the mind, on thoughts from the Word of God – it will grow....

"The mother studies **daily** how to let the child have something to eat.... She ought no less carefully to feed each lamb entrusted to her care."⁷²⁸ She, and especially her husband, should feed each of their children not only with physical food but also with the Word of God – **daily**!

Well may one ask: How is this to be done? Replied Murray: "Teach your child to believe the Word of God! ... Teach your child to know the Word of God! ... Let family worship be so ordered, as to be really helpful! ... Teach your child to love God's Word! ... Teach your child to obey the Word of God!"

Writing only decades ago, Murray rightly remarked: "The custom of family worship is to be found in almost every Christian family. Every day, a portion of God's Holy Word is read there.... Daily gathering the family around the Word of God might [and should] become a season of real spiritual refreshment and nourishment....

⁷²⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 87f.

⁷²⁷ *Ib.*, pp. 91f.

⁷²⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 229f.

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"Let parents make a real effort to have their family worship so ordered; to lead the children into the holy place; to be presented before the Lord; to be fed with the bread each one requires; and to receive the father's blessing for the day! Let them prepare for reading of the Word with the family! Let the reading be of God's Word; in His presence; and waiting on His Spirit!"⁷²⁹

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Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray's first published book – the first of many on the subject of the covenant – was *Jesus the Friend of Children*. Others are *The Children for Christ*, and the latter's condensation *How to Raise Your Children for Christ*. In the last-mentioned book, Murray has a short 'Preface' and a brief statement of 'Principles of Training.' We now quote some of the more useful thoughts from this material.

Explained Murray:⁷³⁰ "God is awakening in many hearts the longing to live a truly consecrated life.... No sooner has the surrender to such a life taken place, but the desire comes to have all who belong to us partake of the blessing – especially to have our home life, with all its affections, its relationships, its duties, sanctified too.

"To all parents who long to have their homes truly consecrated by God's presence and service, God's Word has a message of comfort and strength. It is this: God is willing to be the God of their house, and with His divine power will do more than they can ask and think! If they will but open their hearts in faith to rest in the promise and power of God – He will prove Himself to be for their house what He has been to themselves.

"The one thing needful, is that parents should know and believe what He has undertaken to be and to do as the God of their seed.... As a parent, I put myself and my children into God's hands, believing that He will fulfil His promise – that He does at once accept and take charge. I confess the sins by which I have prevented God from working through me as He wants to in my home.

"I yield myself to be His humble, holy witness; His living, obedient servant. And humbly but trustingly, I say, 'Oh, when wilt Thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart!' [Psalm 101:2] ... 'By faith, we understand!' [Hebrews 11:3]. When faith has seen God planning and undertaking, it is a simple thing for it to rest and trust; to praise and act.

⁷²⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 272f.

⁷³⁰ *How to Raise Your Children for Christ* (Preface & pp. 445f).

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"It may be helpful for parents – to young mothers especially [*cf.* First Timothy 2:15 & 5:5-15 & Titus 2:3-5] – to give a short summary of the principles on which all training rests. Let them meditate carefully and prayerfully on what it implies! They will find that it is a work that cannot be performed without careful thought and earnest purpose. It is only as reflection opens up to them the infinite significance of the holy work of moulding, of really forming and giving shape to an immortal spirit – that they will feel urged with due fervour and faith to plead the promise: 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God Who giveth to all men liberally! ... And it shall be given him!'

"Example is better than precept. Not in what we say and teach, but in what we are and do – lies the power of training. Not as we think, as an ideal for which to train our children – but as we live, do we train them. It is not our wishes or our theory – but our will and our practice that really train. It is by living the Christ-life that we...will influence the young mind to love it – and to have it too."

Elsewhere, Murray concluded:⁷³¹ "God expects our children to grow up believers! We ought to expect it, too! ... Christian parent, this life is for you! Learn with each new morning to say: 'For this day, I accept Jesus for all my duties – as believer, and as parent.' Commit simply, commit fully to Him – every duty; every difficulty; every circumstance; every moment! And say confidently: 'I know in Whom I have believed'...."

"Lord Jesus, do teach us to know Thee as the Saviour of our children from their very birth, and in the homes we have to form for them! ... Let our whole life and communion with them day by day, every day and all the day, be in the faith of the Son of God Who loved us and gave Himself for us! Amen!"

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With Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. (1837-1920), we will be somewhat shorter. He led one of the busiest lives ever lived – as Professor of Theology; as Minister of the Word; and as Prime Minister of the Netherlands and the Dutch Empire (from Surinam to Indonesia). Yet he also not only practised family worship. He also wrote much about family devotions.

Significantly – after being raised in this very way – so too did his sons. We refer to Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr., and Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper.

Wrote Rev. Professor Dr. Kuyper Sr.: "A family is Christian inasmuch as Christian morals finely depict the basic characteristics of the family – and also...inasmuch as it becomes a family church in miniature.... Wherever special

⁷³¹ *Ib.*, pp. 279 & 210f.

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grace has worked Christian faith in the heart, it must automatically lead to the family becoming a house church. This is grounded in infant baptism, and...also in the so-called 'consecration of marriage'....

"The application of the Lord's Prayer to family life, not only teaches us to pray that 'the Name of God shall be hallowed' even in the family. It also teaches that 'His Kingdom comes' even in the family.... The members of the Christian family are to live together as believers, or as those who have been called unto faith.... The Church is expanded by way of Marriage.... It is from marriage that the 'seed of the Church' proceeds."⁷³²

Kuyper continued: "The family altar requires that all members of the family will honour their God together – in everything concerning family life. And because they are male and female sinners, they are to honour Him together – in Christ.... Here, the man is to lead.... Or, if deceased or absent, the mother; or where both are unable, the oldest son.... At least once every day the whole family is to gather around God's Word – if possible, with songs of praise.... Praying together...can also exalt family religion....

"It is not to be a prayer for the one who prays, but a prayer for the **family**. One must particularly not lose sight of the need of having the whole family present – even the children, and also the youngest....

"At the family altar, Christ now rules as King of the household. Through it, it is His Spirit Who works on the family. And from this family altar, the sanctifying influence proceeds – through which Christ maintains His royal rule over the entire family, and over each of its members.

"This is constantly demonstrated in the 'sacrifices' which, at that family altar, are brought to Christ as an efflux of His blessing.... This must be imprinted even on the child; and servants too must not withdraw themselves from it.

"Each on his own, as well as the entire household, must for Christ's sake be prepared not only to bring sacrifices. He must also desire to do so – so that the blessing of the family altar does not restrict itself to the family, but also flows forth to those outside.... Christ Himself controls all our goods. He in fact does so – through the head of the family, and through every one of its members.

"It shows how deeply Christ wants to penetrate into the entire fabric of the Christian family.... In the covenant, the church and the family are interlinked already.... Christ's Kingship bears a quite singular character.

⁷³² *Common Grace*, Kampen: Kok, 4th impression, III pp. 311-29 & 364.

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"The man is the head of the family.... This Kingship [of Christ over the family] benefits the man; the woman; the children; and the servants.... In this way – it creates that rich, pure household happiness which is enjoyed in the home life only of Christian countries."⁷³³

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Kuyper illustrated this latter statement especially in his book *Meditations for Family Life* – also (sub)titled *When thou sittest in thy house*. There, he explained:⁷³⁴ "If you compare the state of the nation in [Ancient] Israel with that in [Ancient] Rome and [Ancient] Greece, nothing is so conspicuous as the much higher place of honour which the family occupies in Israel's national life.

"From Israel, this beautiful characteristic has passed over into Christ's Church. And in all lands where the cross has been planted, home life has been augmented by cordiality and cohesive power. Even among the Christian peoples, the family stands higher in the Protestant than in the Romish nations. Prussia is superior to Austria; England to France; Holland to Belgium. But the sense of family has penetrated the most strongly among the Calvinistic nations: in Switzerland, Scotland, Holland, and America....

"It is in our quiet and thorough family life, that the power of our civil state and the nerve of our national vitality has been imbedded.... For this very reason, however, it is precisely the Calvinists in the land who have the holy and divine calling of saving this precious heirloom – by bold testimony and by serious practice....

"May He Who is the wonderful Creator of the family, then command His blessing over...many a family! ... May He sanctify family life, and exalt its vital tone! May He cause you to sit down in your home, richer and richer – and more and more happy with the treasure [of daily family worship] which God has given you in that glorious co-existence!"

* * * * *

In 1956, *The Book of Common Order* of the Presbyterian Church of Australia gave two 'Orders' for the 'Solemnisation of Marriage.' In the first Order, it stated that marriage "was ordained for the continuance of the holy ordinance of family life – [so] that children, who are the heritage of the Lord, should be duly nurtured and trained in godliness."

⁷³³ *Pro Rege*, Kampen: Kok, 1911, II pp. 474-87 & 538f.

⁷³⁴ Amsterdam: Hoeveker & Wormser, 1899, 2nd ed., pp. iii-vi.

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God is then implored: "We beseech Thee to bestow Thy Fatherly blessing on the families enriched by this union. May our homes be filled with Thy peace; may our lives be spent in Thy fellowship and service; and may we be helpers of one another's faith and love – until we come by Thy mercy to the life where love is made perfect! ... Give them a lasting posterity, and bless them in their children!"

In the second Order, it stated that "marriage is a holy estate instituted by God and hallowed by our Lord's gracious presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. It is commended in Holy Scripture as honourable in all, and consecrated as signifying the mystical union between Christ and His Church.... It was ordained for the life-long companionship, help, and comfort which husband and wife ought to have of each other."⁷³⁵

The Australian *Book of Common Order* also provided 'Special Intercessions' for 'the Blessing of a New Home' intended for newly-wed couples. Here, the petitioners intercede: 'O Lord..., we beseech Thee Who settest the solitary in families, to bestow Thy blessing upon Thy servants whom Thou hast set to dwell together under the shelter of this roof!

"Give them grace to ask Thee to hallow their home with Thy presence – that it may ever be an abode of holy love and blessed peace! Bless their going out and their coming in, from this time forth! ... Knit them closely together in worship of Thee...through Jesus Christ our Lord!"⁷³⁶

Again, the Australian Presbyterian *Book of Church Order* at the same time also provided 'Special Prayers' in the home 'For Morning': "O Lord...Who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us in the same with Thy mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin" *etc.*, "through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Or again: "O Lord..., help us each day to know more of Thee, and by the power of Thy Spirit use us to show forth Thyself to others" – through "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!"⁷³⁷

The Australian Presbyterian *Book of Common Order* also provided four household prayers 'For Evening.' The first runs: "Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night!" – *etc.*

⁷³⁵ London: Oxford University Press, 1965 ed., pp. 123-32.

⁷³⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 231f.

⁷³⁷ *Ib.*, p. 216.

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The second: "O Lord..., we pray Thee at this evening hour to take us and all whom we love into Thy holy keeping! ... Grant that as our bodies are refreshed with quiet sleep, so our souls may rest in the confidence of Thy forgiving mercy!" – *etc.*

The third: "Heavenly Father, Who slumberest not nor sleepest, we commend to Thy gracious care and keeping ourselves and all who belong to us. We thank Thee for the light of this day, and now for the restful night.... Wake us to meet tomorrow's duties in strength of body!" – *etc.*

Finally: "O God Who hast drawn over weary day the restful veil of night, enfold us...[so] that in untroubled slumber we may...win from Thee new power for the morrow's labours – through Jesus Christ!"⁷³⁸

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In 1960, the noted American Baptist Evangelist Rev. Dr. John R. Rice published an important chapter on 'Family Worship' – in his book on *The Home*.⁷³⁹ There, he stated *inter alia*:

"Personally, I like best the reading of the Word of God chapter by chapter. Many families have a custom of reading one page from a devotional book, like *Streams in the Desert* by Mrs. Cowman, or *Morning and Evening* by C.H. Spurgeon. These are rich and blessed, and I believe their comments are very helpful....

"Many thousands of families have been blessed by the book of selected Scriptures called *Daily Light*. It is very fine. But, however good these Scripture verses may be – I believe that there is a greater value in using Scriptures consecutively, in their order. Children ought to read Scriptures, and be able to find them in the Bible.... Use the Scripture! Use it honestly! Have everybody read it in the family worship!"

* * * * *

In 1971, "Mr. Banner of Truth" – the well-known Rev. Iain H. Murray (who later became and remained a Minister of the previously-mentioned Presbyterian Church of Australia) – indicated that he had been raised with regular family worship in his father's home. Wrote Iain Murray:⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 216-17.

⁷³⁹ Rice: *op. cit.*, pp. 239f.

⁷⁴⁰ I.H. Murray: *The Puritan Hope*, London: Banner of Truth, 1971, pp. xv-xviii.

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"My father was a Christian who believed in prayer.... I knew and understood little of his praying, until after my own conversion at the age of seventeen. From that time, as I listened to my father's petitions, I concurred with them all – all, that is, except one....

"Our difference concerned the extent to which the success of the Kingdom of Christ is to be expected in the Earth. My father would pray for its universal spread and global triumph.... According to the [other] teaching with which I was then in contact, these petitions were misguided.... Evangelical belief, so I thought, bound one to a contrary persuasion – namely, that growing evil must dominate the world-scene until Jesus Christ comes again....

"I was therefore ill at ease over this one aspect of our family prayers.... In the urging of his petitions, I realized that my father was often employing scriptural language....

"Some while after, I gave up the [pre]millenarian view of future history" – and embraced instead *The Puritan Hope*. Iain Murray thus returned to the postmillennial faith of his fathers – as the fruit of his own father's family prayers, while he was growing up in his parents' home.

* * * * *

In the United States, the Presbyterian Church in America said in its 1975 *Book of Church Order*⁷⁴¹ that "the purpose of marriage is the enrichment of the lives of those who enter into this estate, the propagation of the race, and the extension of Christ's Church to the glory of the covenant God."

It also stated that "in addition to public worship, it is the duty of each person in secret, and of every family in private, to worship God.... Family worship – which should be observed by every family – consists in Prayer, reading the Scriptures, and singing Praises....

"Parents should instruct their children in the Word of God and in the principles of our holy religion.... Parents should set an example of piety...before the family...on the Lord's Day.... In the supreme task of religious education, parents should co-operate with the Church – by setting their children an example...and by leading them in the consistent application of the teachings of the Gospel in their daily activities."

⁷⁴¹Decatur Ga.: Committee on Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1975, pp. 87 & 90.

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Further, as regards the duties specifically of the Ruling Elders:⁷⁴² "They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant; comfort the mourner; nourish and guard the children of the Church.

"All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love, are especially incumbent upon them [the Elders] by divine vocation – and are to be discharged as ministerial duties. They should pray with and for the people; be careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock."

Yet notwithstanding all the above: "The spiritual nurture, instruction and training of the children of the Church are committed by God primarily to their parents.... It is a principal duty of the Church to promote true religion in the home.

"True discipleship involves learning the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit both at home and in the Church. Without learning..., there is sin and iniquity....

"The home and the Church should also make special provision for instructing the children in the Bible and in the Church Catechisms [note the plural!].... The Session shall encourage the parents of the Church to guide their children in the catechizing and disciplining of them in the Christian religion."⁷⁴³

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1977 saw publication of the National Church Association of the Church of Scotland's *Reformed Book of Common Order*.⁷⁴⁴ Its impressive 'Order for the Solemnisation of Marriage' stated that "marriage is a holy estate of life. It was instituted by God in the beginning when He created Heaven and Earth....

"It was instituted for the lifelong companionship and devotion of husband and wife; for the mutual fulfilment and satisfaction of their natural affections; for the procreation of children and their godly upbringing; and for the stability of society."

It next cited Matthew 19:3-6, from the 1562 *Book of Common Order*. In addition, it also refers to "Proverbs 31, Isaiah 32:2, First John 4:12-21, Ephesians 5, and First Corinthians 13."

⁷⁴²*Ib.*, p. 11.

⁷⁴³*Ib.*, p. 45.

⁷⁴⁴Edinburgh: Brunswick, 1978, pp. 66f & 49-53.

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Then, it implored the heavenly Father to "hear our prayers for this husband and wife" – that they may "apply themselves to live together in godly love, in Christian joy, and good example" – so that "their home be a house of prayer." Finally, God is asked to "bless the homes in which they receive nurture and admonition – [and] the parents, relations and friends who share their joy today."

This Scottish *Reformed Book of Common Order* also suggested a prayer for 'Morning Worship in the Home.' It there thanked God for preservation during the previous night, and petitions Him that – as "a united family" – all of its members may "give thanks and worship Thee" *etc.* Similarly, it suggested an appropriate prayer for 'Evening Worship in the Home' – thanking God that He has "gathered us together this evening" before "we retire to our beds" *etc.*

It also⁷⁴⁵ provided the godly Scottish Presbyterian Rev. Robert Murray "M'Cheyne's *Calendar of Daily Readings*" as a completely listed "concise course whereby one can read through the whole Bible once a year – the Psalms and the New Testament twice." Then it gave some extra instructions, as follows:

"The head of the family should previously read over the chapter indicated for the family worship, and mark two or three of the most prominent verses upon which he may dwell, giving a few explanatory thoughts, and asking several simple questions....

"The portions read...for family...reading, would be greatly illuminated – if they were preceded by a moment's silent prayer: 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law!' Psalm 119:18.

"Let the conversation at the family meals frequently turn upon the chapter read! Thus, every meal will be sacred – being sanctified by the Word and prayer." First Timothy 4:3-5.

* * * * *

Rev. Dr. J. Graham Miller, veteran Missionary-Emeritus to Vanuatu, is also one of the founding fathers of the continuing Presbyterian Church of Australia as re-constituted in 1977. In 1986, he corresponded with the author of this then-forthcoming dissertation (in its unexpanded format). Wrote Dr. Miller:⁷⁴⁶ "Dear Nigel.... The volume on *Daily Family Worship* appeals to one as an urgent need for the entire Church.

⁷⁴⁵ *Ib.*, pp. 73-85.

⁷⁴⁶ See his *Letter to Lee*, 23rd Sept. 1986.

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"The individualism which emerged with the 'Morning Watch' of the Student Volunteer Missionary Movement after 1880, was accentuated by 'Quiet Time' emphasis of the last 70 years (Scripture Union and Keswick and Navigators). I hope you can show where evangelicals over-compensated here, and lost sight of the family worship pattern of Scripture and the historic Church."

In the same year, Principal-Emeritus Rev. Professor Dr. Harold J. Whitney – Assembly Evangelist of the Queensland Presbyterian Church of Australia – endorsed the first edition of this present dissertation. He then proceeded to describe⁷⁴⁷ it as "a monumental work, covering the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation on the theme of daily family worship – and going on to trace the impact on Church History of such family worship...."

He concluded: "Significantly, the document closes on a personal note, testifying to the impact of daily family worship, night and morning, on the Lee family. It is...a safeguard against the family-splitting tendencies of much of our modern life.... We thank God for this testimony, and I may add my word of grateful thanks for my own parents' fidelity in bringing up their family in the same way."

In the above paragraphs, Dr. Whitney – who had himself been Professor of Systematic Theology at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological Hall in Brisbane until 1980 – is referring to his successor. For the author of the document concerned, was appointed to that professorship in Australia as from the beginning of 1981.

In 1987, he completed the D.Min. dissertation *Daily Family Worship – subtitled: Household Devotions Each Morning and Evening as a Chief Means of Church Revival*. A summary of it appeared in the chapter 'Revival and Daily Family Worship' in the book *Revive Your Work, O Lord!* – published in 1991 by the Committee on Training for the Ministry of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, and edited by Rev. Professor Dr. Nigel Lee.

Further, he has attempted to impart the practice of daily family worship to his Theological Students. Later, some of them – and notably Rev. Graham Nicholson of Queensland and Rev. Stephen Nicholson of Tasmania – have sought to simplify the age-old Scottish Presbyterian *Directory for Family Worship*, in order to encourage their parishioners to resurrect their own family altars.

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⁷⁴⁷ See his 'Foreword' at the very front of this present work.

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The great-grandfather of this present writer, George Jameson, was a very fiery preacher. However, his children (including Elizabeth Jameson Lee) and also his grandchildren (including William Sydney Lee) drifted away from the Lord – for many years. Thus it was that this present writer's father, William Sydney Lee, was raised without the Bible – and himself married a Roman Catholic, Alice Maud Smith. They produced one child, the present writer of these words.

In the providence of God, the present writer and his father's mother (Elizabeth Jameson Lee) became Christians. They then prayed together at home, daily, for the conversion of the other members of the household – William Sydney and his wife Alice Maud Smith Lee (this writer's parents).

In God's good time, and while at home, the present writer had the joy of leading both his father and mother to Christ. The altar of daily family worship – which had been broken down since the days of George Jameson – was then rebuilt in their home. *Cf.* Malachi 4:4-6 & Luke 1:16f.

The present writer then met his own wife Nellie, who had been raised on a farm by Christian parents practising daily family worship. They were married in 1963. Ever since their wedding, they have held family devotions together in their own home – every day.

Generally, they have read from the Old Testament every morning, and from the New Testament every evening. Thus, ever since the conceptions of their children and even before their births, not one day has passed when those children have not themselves participated (morning and evening) in this daily family worship – for as long as they have been under the parents' roof. Psalm 22:9-10; 139:7-17; Luke 1:36-45; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14.

Practically since their births, their children Johanna and Annamarie have had their own Bibles and their own Psalter Hymnals and Catechism Books – even at daily family worship. See Second Timothy 1:3-5.

They learned to read the Bible as their first book, long before starting to go to school. Second Timothy 3:14-16f. As soon as they could, they were asked to read one verse of it out loud – at daily family worship. See Matthew 21:16.

Thus, over the years, every member of the home has read out loud, before the others, one verse each – every morning, and every evening. Isaiah 8:20 *cf.* 28:13. This, of course, is in addition to a short family prayer before every meal (First Timothy 4:3-5); and also in addition to his or her own personal devotions when each is alone (Matthew 6:6).

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In this way, since the arrival of the last addition to the family – during daily household devotions, the entire Bible has been covered at least once. This has been done: at some depth; in chronological order; down through the years. *Cf.* Revelation 1:3 & 22:17-19.

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Here is a typical morning family worship session – after breakfast, and before leaving the home. The father prays a very short opening prayer. *Cf.* Psalm 119:107. The whole family then sings a small portion of one Psalm all together. Psalm 147:1. The father then reads one verse of Scripture out loud – generally from the Old Testament. *Cf.* Luke 24:27f,44f. The other members of the family do likewise, in sequential order. *Cf.* Matthew 19:4f & Luke 1:1-4.

The father then explains the few verses read. *Cf.* Second Peter 3:16. Each family member then says what new thing he or she has learned. *Cf.* Acts 8:30-36. If the Bible passage is too profound, only one verse – or even only part of one verse – will be explained at that session. *Cf.* Matthew 5:18. The family then kneels down together. *Cf.* Psalm 95:6. The father then asks only one of them to pray, shortly, for the family's special needs that day. *Cf.* Nehemiah 1:11 *etc.*

At night, right after the evening meal, a somewhat similar pattern is followed. Deuteronomy 6:6f *cf.* Psalm 55:17. Now, however, the worship can be longer – as there is no need to rush off from home to work or school. *Cf.* Psalm 1:2 & Acts 17:11 *etc.*

The only differences in the evening pattern, are the following. The reading is generally now from the New Testament, not the Old. John 16:13f *cf.* Second Peter 1:13-16 & 3:15f. The portion sung is from a Scriptural Hymn or Paraphrase, not from a Psalm. Ephesians 5:18-25 & 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:16-21. And, after the explanation of the Scripture – one question and answer of the *Shorter Catechism* is propounded, explained, and then jointly recited. *Cf.* Proverbs 22:6 margin & First Timothy 6:12f.

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This, then – Praise, Scripture, Prayer – is the pattern of our daily family worship. Praise – for "the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the dwellings of the justified." Psalm 118:15. Scripture – for those whom Christ has made "noble" are to "receive the Word" with "all readiness of mind," and to "search the Scriptures daily." Acts 17:11. And Prayer – for "fathers, bring up your children..., praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit!" Ephesians 6:4,18.

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So that is how our family worships God each day. He is the God of the families of Adam, Noah, and Job; the God of the families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of the households of Moses, Joshua, and Samson; and the God of the families of Samuel, David, and Solomon. He is the God of the households of John the Baptizer, Jesus, and Peter; and the God of the families of Cornelius, Paul, and Timothy.

He is the God of the *Didache*, of Gregory Nazianzen, and of Chrysostom; the God of Luther, Calvin, and Knox; the God of the Dutch Reformed Standards; and the God of the early Scottish Presbyterian General Assemblies.

He is the God of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (21:6); the God of the 1547 Scottish Presbyterian *Directory for Family Worship*; and the God of Henry Wilkinson's...and Obadiah Lee's *Address to the Christian Reader (especially Heads of Families)* and of Thomas Manton's *Epistle to the Reader* (of those *Westminster Standards*).

He is the God of Matthew Henry, of J.W. Alexander; of Charles and Archibald Hodge; of Benjamin M. Palmer; of James and John G. Paton; of Revs. Andrew Murray Sr. and Jr.; of Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper and his sons – and of contemporary Presbyterianism too.

This, then, is my family's God. How we worship Him at home, has been described above. May He – just so – be the God of your family too! "You yourselves must today choose Whom you will serve! ... But as for me and my household – we will serve the Lord!" Joshua 24:15.

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Also in the United States, there has of late been a renewed interest in daily family worship. In 1985, Atlanta's *Counsel of Chalcedon* published Rev. Wayne Rogers's articles on *Family Worship*.

In 1989, Presbyterian Heritage Publications of Dallas reprinted the famous 1827 sermon on *Family Worship* – subtitled *Motives and Directions for Domestic Piety* – by the great Swiss theologian Rev. Professor Dr. J.H. Merle d'Aubigne'.

In 1991, Sprinkle Publications of Harrisonburg (Virginia) reprinted Rev. Professor Dr. J.W. Alexander's 1847 *Thoughts on Family Worship* and Rev. Professor Dr. B.M. Palmer's 1876 essay *The Family in its Civil and Churchly Aspects*.

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Also in 1991, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in South Carolina reprinted (Richmond Va.) Union Seminary's B.M. Smith's 1859 *Family Religion*. It is subtitled *The Domestic Relations as Regarded by Christian Principles*.

This, Greenville followed up in 1992 with their book *Worship in the Presence of God* (edited by Rev. Frank J. Smith and Rev. Dr. David C. Lachman). It is dedicated to the glory of God, and was written in acknowledgment of Rev. Professor Dr. Morton H. Smith (the founder of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary). It includes an important chapter on 'Family Worship' – by Rev. Professor Dr. Douglas F. Kelly, of Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson (Mississippi).

In 1993, Soli Deo Gloria Publishers in Pittsburgh produced the book *The Godly Family* (including a reprint of the great Evangelist George Whitefield's writing *The Great Duty of Family Religion*). Finally, in August 1994, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary again enriched the Christian Church by publishing Kerry Ptacek's excellent book *Family Worship* – with the subtitle: *Biblical Basis; Historical Reality; Current Need*.

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Every year, Presbyterian Church Supplies of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, for the Presbyterian Church of Australia, produces a *Book of Family Worship*. The 1995 edition of that book states⁷⁴⁸ the following about 'The Family Altar':

"Along with many other Christians, the Presbyterian Church has a long tradition of encouraging family worship throughout the week in the homes of its members. Parents, children and any other members of the household have joined together to read the Scripture and to pray...[and] also to sing praise.

"Family worship is not a substitute for Bible study and prayer by individual Christians, but it is a strong bond of family life. Even amid the pressures of the television age, it is worth making a real effort to provide a time for family worship, perhaps at the breakfast or dinner table....

"To help you have family worship, daily Bible readings are listed for each day. If possible, you should spend a few minutes discussing what you have read.... The prayers are a guide only – the best prayers are those which you utter from your own heart and in accordance with your own needs. The *[Shorter] Catechism* says: 'Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, for things

⁷⁴⁸ *Book of Family Worship 1995*, Brisbane: Presbyterian Church Supplies, 1994, p. 2.

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agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.' Question 98."

The *Book of Family Worship* provides suggested 'Daily Prayers' for every day of the week, morning and evening.⁷⁴⁹ These are followed by Children's Prayers,⁷⁵⁰ by Graces Before Meals,⁷⁵¹ and by a Cycle of Daily Intercession for outreach in all the works of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.⁷⁵²

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Summarizing, in this chapter we have seen that the author of the great 1693 *Economy of the Covenants*, Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Witsius, grew up with and advocated daily family worship. Even before that time, American Puritans were maintaining that practice. The 1733 Synod of Philadelphia, of the Presbyterian Church in America, accordingly did likewise.

During the so-called Great Awakening, in spite of an individualization of religion to the detriment of the family, especially the Tennant's stressed the role of the Christian home in promoting religion. Indeed, George Whitefield told Americans he despaired of national revival – without family religion.

However, *via* the Methodists, the New Light Synod then adopted the Moravian/Wesleyan method of using the 'conventicle' rather than the family – as its preferred vehicle of promoting worship in small cells. Thus, in its own (per)version of the original 1647 Scottish Presbyterian *Directory for Family Worship* – it excised that portion thereof which had restricted daily household devotions to each family by itself.

Not surprisingly, thenceforth daily family worship declined – in Late-Colonial America. However, strong opposition to that decline came especially from outspoken godly advocates of daily family worship – such as the French-American Huguenots and the Gaelic-American Presbyterians. Further opposition is evident in the testimony of the remarkable Rev. Dr. Jonathan Edwards – who in his 'Farewell Sermon' bemoaned the neglect of the blessed practice of family worship.

Particularly the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. protested. It did so especially in the cardinaly-important closing chapter titled

⁷⁴⁹ *Ib.*, pp. 12-20.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ib.*, p. 21.

⁷⁵¹ *Ib.*, p. 22.

⁷⁵² *Ib.*, pp. 22-29.

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'The Directory for Secret and Family Worship' – within its 1787 *Directory of Worship*.

For a long time thereafter, particularly the Old School of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. indeed strove to maintain its historic practice of daily family devotions. It was successful especially in the South, where even slaves were regarded as part of the worshipping household (Genesis 14:13f & 18:18f). Also at Princeton, the practice was magnificently upheld and warmly advocated by Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander and (his son) Rev. Professor James Waddell Alexander – and by Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge and (his son) Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander Hodge.

However, especially after the family-fracturing industrial revolution and the catastrophic 1861-65 American War Between the States, Presbyterianism plunged. Also the phenomenal growth of individualistic Baptists ultimately undermined family worship – by overstressing the importance of personal devotions, at the expense of those of the household as such.

The rapidly-spreading and brand-new institution of the Sunday School was originally intended to educate only ignorant orphans and the children of infidels. Sadly, however, it was soon misused also by most covenant households – to the neglect of their own daily family worship. Thus Union Seminary's B.M. Smith. Indeed, Rev. Professor Dr. B.M. Palmer even argued that the glorious Christian doctrine of adoption was triunely linked with the well-being of marriage; with the practice of infant baptism; and with the exercise of daily household worship at the holy shrine of the nuclear family.

We then described the fruits of daily family worship in the homes of: James Paton and his children; Andrew Murray and his descendants; and Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. and his sons. Next we looked at this teaching: in the 1956 *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church of Australia; in the famous American Baptist Evangelist Rev. Dr. John R. Rice; in "Mr. Banner of Truth" Rev. Iain H. Murray; in the 1975 *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America; and in the 1977 *Reformed Book of Church Order* of the National Church Association of the Church of Scotland. Since then, we also referred to recent reprints in America of writings on family worship by George Whitefield, J.H. Merle d'Aubigne', J.W. Alexander, B.M. Palmer and B.M. Smith – and fresh works thereon by D.F. Kelly and K. Ptacek.

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Finally, returning to Australia, we detailed the warm advocacy of daily family worship by Rev. Dr. J. Graham Miller; by Principal-Emeritus Rev. Professor Dr. Harold J. Whitney; and by Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Nigel Lee. We then drew attention to the energetic endeavours of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland each year, to benefit the Presbyterian Church of Australia – in its ambitious promotion of an annual *Book of Family Worship*.

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May the prayer right now of every reader then be: "O Lord, correct me – but...not in Your anger! Pour out Your fury upon the heathen that do not acknowledge You – and upon the families that do not call on Your Name!" Jeremiah 10:24f. Are You going to draw out Your anger to all generations? Will You not revive us again?" Psalm 85:5f. "In wrath, remember mercy!" Habakkuk 3:2. "O Lord, revive Your work!"

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Daily Family Worship from Adam to Noah

Prior to creation, each Person of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Spirit – praised One Another from all eternity. Later, while shaping our Earth's sky and its clouds and its mountains – before their Creator and Father, His Filial Wisdom (alias God the Son) rejoiced together **daily**, in the fellowship of Their Holy Spirit. John 17:5-24 & Hebrews 9:14 cf. Genesis 1:1-5 & Proverbs 8:30-34.

In so doing, these three Persons within the Triune God were setting an example for also Their later triune image – the first human family of husband and wife and child(ren) – to follow. Genesis 1:26f & 4:3-26 cf. Proverbs 8:12-34. Indeed, this is an example of daily praise which also all of the descendants of that first human family should follow – even after they themselves got married and in turn set up their own households. Genesis 2:23-25 & James 3:8f.

Also the 'families' of created angels praised Jehovah every morning during Earth's formation week. Perhaps this too was intended as an example for the first human family, and indeed for all of the subsequent families of mankind, later to follow. Job 38:4-13 cf. 1:4-6 & Ephesians 3:15 & Colossians 1:16.

At any rate, even before the fall of man, we see regular human household devotions – apparently in both the morning (cf. Genesis 2:21-25) and the evening (cf. Genesis 1:28-31; 2:1-3). These were maintained: from man's formation; past his fall; and even beyond the flood. Cf. Genesis 1:26-31; 3:8f; 4:26; 5:22-26; 6:9f; 9:1f. So too, apparently, was weekly sabbath worship. Cf. Genesis 2:1-3; 4:3f; 7:4-11; 8:6-12; 8:18-22.

Especially the Westminster Confession teaches this. For Adam knew all Ten Commandments (W.C.F. 19:1-2), including the Second and the Fourth and the Fifth and the Seventh. These injunctions require that "all men" (just like their ancestors Adam and Eve) should regularly render to the Lord God "prayer with thanksgiving" – as part of their required "religious worship" (compare W.C.F. 21:3).

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Collectively, the Ten Commandments require also that the Triune "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily." W.C.F. 21:6. Indeed, they require that according to "the Law of Nature...a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God" – and "particularly one day in seven for a sabbath...be kept holy unto Him...from the beginning of the World." See W.C.F. 21:7.

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According to Rev. Professors Dr. Martin Luther and John Calvin, the great Puritan John Milton, the Westminster Standards, Rev. Drs. John Owen and Andrew Murray Jr., Rev. Professor Drs. Abraham Kuyper Sr. and Herman Bavinck – Adam and Eve, before the fall, engaged in daily household worship together. They did so: by praising their Lord each day; by daily listening to God's Word; and by daily prayer to the Triune Jehovah Elohim. Indeed, they also did so especially at weekly sabbath worship. Compare W.C.F. 21:1-7 – and, "suprahistorically" (?!), even Karl Barth.

These daily household devotions, and particularly their weekly worship together on successive sabbaths – also according to the implicit teachings of some of the above theologians – seem to have continued even after the fall of our first parents. Such continuation was possible, partly on account of the ineradicable character of man's natural or primordial pre-fall religion – but chiefly on account of God's immediate erection of the post-fall covenant of grace with Adam and his expanding family.

Indeed, traces of family worship can be seen clearly in the sacred records. This is so, concerning Cain and Abel; Seth and Enos; Enoch the Sethite; and the family of Noah.

So Adam and Eve, together, worshipped God daily – before the fall. Cf. Genesis 1:27f; 2:1-3; 2:21-25. Thus Luther, Calvin, Milton, the Westminster Standards, Owen, Andrew Murray, Kuyper, and Bavinck.

Furthermore, Adam and Eve continued this household worship even after the fall. Cf. Genesis 3:8f,15f,21. Thus Calvin, Westminster, and Owen. Such daily family worship was (and is to be) in addition to daily personal worship.

Especially Calvin insisted that Adam gave regular religious instruction to his children while they were growing up (cf. Genesis 4:2f). Also Seth and other godly children of Adam and Eve, when adults, continued practising family worship in their own homes (cf. Genesis 4:25f). Indeed, in the days of Seth's son Enos, even regular meetings of several families frequently worshipping

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together as a congregation – were commenced at least on a weekly basis. Cf. Genesis 4:26.

Professor John Calvin and Dr. John Owen and Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon all implicitly yet correctly concluded that amidst apostasy at least the household of Enoch the Sethite, a later descendant of Enos, still kept on upholding daily family worship. For Enoch 'walked with God' before his sons and daughters, and apparently did so 'all the days' of his earthly life. Genesis 5:22f. So too, apparently, did his grandson Lamech the Sethite. Genesis 5:28-31. Lamech's son Noah too 'walked with God.' Later, he also worshipped together with his sons and their wives. Genesis 6:9f.

Indeed, while in the ark and thereafter, the family of Noah so worshipped – apparently every day of their lives, and certainly on each sabbath. See Genesis 7:1-11; 8:6-12; 8:14-22. This they kept on doing – even during, and (at least for quite some time) also after, the great flood. Thus too especially Spurgeon. Genesis 1:26f; 6:9f; 9:1-11.

Consequently, the post-flood family of Noah was re-enjoined to keep also the original covenantal commands given to Adam's household both before and after the fall. Inasmuch as all human beings alive today have descended from Adam as well as from Noah – the universal obligation upon all human beings to practise daily household worship, as well as weekly sabbath worship, will continue till the very end of time. Genesis 8:18-22 & 9:13-19f. Indeed, it will keep on enduring – as long as or even 'while the Earth remains!'

Daily Family Worship from Shem to Malachi

Even after the Noachic flood and the destruction of the tower of Babel, household worship long continued in the homes of Noah and those of at least two of his three sons – even as it had before and during and immediately after the flood. See: Genesis 6:9f; 7:1-11; 8:6-12; 8:18-22; 9:1-11; 9:18-29. Indeed, this practice continued especially in the **domestic** as well as in the ecclesiastical and political "tents" or homes alias the **dwellings** of the early descendants of Shem and Japheth – who served the "blessed...Lord God." Genesis 9:26f.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in the "tents" of the later Shemite Job, and those of his seven grown-up sons (and three daughters). Job 1:1-5 compare Westminster Confession of Faith 21:6. Family worship then indeed diminished among certain other households – but not in the circles of the godly Job.

The memory of man's ancient Paradise – of the angels praising God early in the morning of the days of our Earth's formation week (and ever since); of Adam's first transgression; and of man's seven-day week and weekly holy day

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of worship – apparently lingered on with Job, in the land of Uz. Job 1:5f; 2:1-13; 26:13 to 27:3; 31:33; 33:4-6; 38:4-7 & 42:8.

According to Cyprian, Cyril, Calvin, Matthew Henry, the Westminster Confession (21:6), Rev. Professor Dr. F. Delitzsch, and Bavinck's associate Rev. Dr. W.B. Renkema – daily and especially weekly acts of family worship were particularly conspicuous in the home of Job. Implicitly, according to Delitzsch, this apparently continued till the end of Job's life – at more than 200 years of age – as he daily prayed at home with and for his descendants and his friends until he died, "being old and full of days." Job 42:8-17.

In the main line of the Messianic covenant, regular household worship is especially prominent in the families of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. At Genesis 14:13f & 18:18f, Abraham is seen to have taught his household about God and His Law. Thus especially Calvin, Matthew Henry, and Andrew Murray. Isaac and his household were people of constant prayer. Genesis 25:20-23 & 26:4-25. Jacob and his family worshipped at their own household altar. Genesis 35:1-14. Indeed, Joseph – on his own knees – brought up also his great-great-grandchildren. Genesis 48:1f cf. 50:23.

In Exodus 10:2, God told Moses to give religious instruction to both of his children and also to his grandchildren (thus Tertullian). Calvin and Andrew Murray both emphasize the importance of a Hebrew father's instruction to his sons, at the Passover (Exodus 12:26f).

Especially the Second, Fourth and Fifth Commandments of the Decalogue – and implicitly also the Seventh – presuppose regular family worship. Thus Tertullian, Cyprian, Luther, Calvin, the Westminster Confession (chapters 19 & 21), the Westminster Larger Catechism (QQ. 108-27), Alexander Smith Paterson in his *Theology of the Shorter Catechism*, and Rev. Professor Dr. Willem Geesink in his *Reformed Ethics* (and other works).

Chrysostom regarded Numbers 11:12 as significant for family worship. Keil and Delitzsch said the same about Numbers 28:3-8 [cf. Hebrews 13:4-15f]. Obviously relevant are Deuteronomy 4:8-11, and especially the commanded morning and evening family instruction conferences mentioned at Deuteronomy 6:6-9 & 6:20-25. Thus: the Apostolic Constitutions, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Luther, Calvin, the Westminster Confession 21:6, and Andrew Murray. Also significant are Deuteronomy 11:18-27 and 32:7 (thus Luther and Calvin).

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A further famous example of regular family worship is found with Joshua (24:15). Thus Calvin, Matthew Henry and Andrew Murray. The same applies to the parents of Samson (Judges 13) – and to Elkanah, Hannah and Samuel. Indeed, the breakdown of their family worship was one of the chief reasons for the destruction of Eli and his sons. First Samuel chapters 1 to 4. Thus too Jerome and Chrysostom.

David promoted regular worship: in the sanctuary; in his kingdom; among his citizens in their homes; and in his own household. Second Samuel 6:12f. Thus Calvin, the Westminster Confession 21:6, Alexander Fletcher, and Henry\Gill\Pink. David grew up with family worship; practised it; and recommended it to others. Psalms 1:2f; 22:9f; 37:25-27; 45:15-17; 118:15; 119:147f and 133:1f. Thus Calvin, Matthew Henry, and Spurgeon.

David prayed thrice daily (Psalm 55:17). So too should we (thus Basil and Calvin). Indeed, all flesh should come to the God of prayer. Psalms 65:1 compare Westminster Confession 21:3. Religious instruction, in the homes, should be passed on from one generation to the next, Psalm 78:1-8 (thus Irenaeus and Calvin). Indeed, regular household worship is the best blessings imaginable. Psalms 127:1f & 128:3f. Thus Justin Martyr, the Apostolic Constitutions, Jerome, Luther, and Spurgeon.

Especially the book of Proverbs (1:8f & 3:33 & 4:1f & 8:30-34 etc.) is rich and relevant to our subject. Thus the Apostolic Constitutions and Matthew Henry. Calvin saw Proverbs 20:7 as pertinent. Many are impressed by Proverbs 22:6. Indeed, Gregory Nazianzen found Proverbs 31 to be a rather good description of the home in which he himself had grown up.

Isaiah 44:1-5 and 59:19-21 are obviously germane. So too is Isaiah 46:3f in the Septuagint Greek: "carried from the womb, and nurtured even to old age." Jeremiah 10:25 pronounces an inspired curse on those families which do not worship Jehovah. Thus Calvin and Matthew Henry. Ezekiel 16:20f is of a similar character. Yet Ezekiel 43:27 (cf. Hebrews 13:4-15f) seems to predict great New Testament blessings via the family altar. Thus Paterson.

Daniel (6:10 cf. 9:3) prayed thrice daily. Thus Calvin and Matthew Henry. The book of Joel (1:3 & 2:16-28 cf. Acts 2:16-38f) is full of positive family worship blessings. The book of Zechariah (5:3-5 & 12:1-14) mentions woes for those who do not claim this blessing, and encourages every family to mourn for its sins with its own household – apart from other families. See Calvin, Matthew Henry, and Spurgeon. Indeed, the book of Malachi (1:6-11 & 2:14f & 3:5-15f & 4:2-6) anticipates the messianic age when all people everywhere will worship God in families daily. Thus Calvin, the Westminster Confession 21:6, and Matthew Henry.

Daily Family Worship in New Testament Times

The 40 A.D. Greek-speaking Judaist Philo gave us useful insights. At that time, he explained, even hellenized "Jews were from their swaddling-clothes...trained to recognize God as their Father."

Similarly, the 90 A.D. Jewish Historian Josephus. He added that Hebrew children, "from their earliest consciousness, learned the laws" of the Lord.

The famous Hebrew-Christian Scholar Rev. Dr. Alfred Edersheim insisted that from the middle of the first century B.C. onward, practically every Hebrew home – no matter how poor – had a copy of some of the Scriptures. It is morally certain, then, that daily family worship – including readings from the Scriptures – was practised assiduously in the homes of Zacharias-Elisabeth-John (the Baptizer) and Joseph-Mary-Jesus (the Saviour). Matthew chapters 1 to 2 and Luke chapters 1 to 2.

In Matthew 6:11 cf. Luke 11:3, Jesus Himself taught His disciples and their families to worship God daily – even as they prayed: "Give us, this day, our daily bread!" Thus: the Didache, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine, Calvin, the Westminster Confession 21:6, Thomas Watson, Alexander Smith Paterson, and Matthew Henry.

Augustine regarded Matthew 7:11 in the same light. Earlier, even Origen found Christ's ministry to little covenant children significant. Matthew 18:1f & 21:15f cf. Psalm 8:3f etc.

Luther found Matthew 25:35 and Luke 23:28 germane to this matter. Others found the various "householder texts" – Matthew 13:52 & 24:45 and Luke 12:42 – to be revealing.

Certainly the 'Great Commission' requires the practice of regular family worship. For the fact that "nations" are to be baptized according to Matthew 28:19 – necessarily requires that also the "lambs" in John 21:15 are to be fed. Thus Andrew Murray.

Acts 2:38f makes it clear that the gospel promises come not only to believers, but also to their children. Further, Acts 2:46 is not talking (as is verse 42) about the sacramental communion of the whole congregation – but about spontaneous household hospitality and regular family worship. Thus Calvin. Indeed, Acts 5:46 and 10:2f and 17:11 (thus Calvin) and also 20:20 (cf. First Corinthians 11:22 & 14:34f) all underline this.

Acts 3:1 & 10:3-30f, and possibly also Second Timothy 1:3. suggest that daily family worship is best scheduled at stated hours. Indeed, especially Acts

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10:2 (cf. verses 4 & 22 & 31 & 33 & 34) clearly proves habitual household devotions. Thus Calvin, the Westminster Confession 21:6, and Matthew Henry.

Acts 10:2-44 also establishes household baptisms. So too do Acts 16:15; 16:30-33; 18:8f and First Corinthians 1:16. Thus Calvin and Matthew Henry. Indeed, even the celebrated Baptist Rev. Dr. John R. Rice belabours the point that the Philippian jailor instituted permanent family worship in his home right after its members had been baptized. Acts 16:34.

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The same conclusions should be drawn from the 'house-church' passages in the sixteenth chapter of Romans (cf. 11:16). Thus Matthew Henry. To be sure, especially First Corinthians 7:14 is talking about a holy home with a holy parent and a holy child (thus Tertullian, Chrysostom, Calvin, etc.).

Ephesians 5:14-19f is discussing family worship. Thus Tertullian; Rev. Professor J.H. Merle d'Aubigne; and Rev. Dr. James Montgomery Boice. More obviously, so too is Ephesians 6:1-4. Thus the Didache, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, the Apostolic Constitutions, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom and Matthew Henry.

Less obviously, so too is Ephesians 6:18's "praying always for all the saints" (cf. 1:1-5). Commented Thomas Watson: "These are children of the family." Very clearly, the same applies also in respect of the parallel passage in Colossians 3:16-21 (cf. 4:21). Thus: Clement of Alexandria, Cyril, Chrysostom, and Calvin.

Household worship in the homes of Paul and Timothy, while they were growing up, is clearly indicated in Second Timothy 1:3-5 and 3:14-17. Thus Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Chrysostom, and especially Calvin. Dr. J.R. Rice finds family prayers at mealtimes in First Timothy 4:3-5. Also in First Timothy 2:8, the Westminster Confession (21:6) apparently sees fathers leading in prayers at home.

In First Timothy 2:15 (cf. 5:5-10 & 5:14 & Titus 2:3-5), Chrysostom sees women instructing their own children (and instructing other women to do the same). Indeed, nobody is to become an Elder or a Deacon – who does not himself practise regular family worship at home (First Timothy 3:1-12 & Titus 1:5-11). For a Church Officer is to encourage others to do the same. Acts 5:46 & 20:20-28 & Titus 1:11f & First Peter 5:1-4 etc. Thus: Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, Calvin, and Matthew Henry.

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In Second Timothy 1:3-5 & 3:14-16, not only Calvin and Matthew Henry but also the Baptist Spurgeon saw regular family worship even from infancy onward. Calvin and Henry saw the same also in Titus 1:6f & 2:3f. Indeed, the same is implied also by the latter verses' parallel pericope in First Timothy 5:8-14. Even Philemon 2f suggests regular family worship. Thus Matthew Henry and Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

In Hebrews 3:13 (cf. 3:3), Christians are commanded to "exhort one another daily." In 5:12f, Calvin saw regular catechizing of children in Christian homes as they grow up. Indeed, in 13:4 and 13:15f, the emphasis clearly seems to be on regular household devotions.

Peter's First Epistle (1:23f & 2:2f & 3:1-7 & 3:20f) clearly teaches household worship. Thus: Origen, Jerome, Augustine, Calvin, the Westminster Confession 21:6, Matthew Henry, and Spurgeon. First John 2:12-14 seems to imply the same. So too does Second John 1-4, in the opinion of Matthew Henry – and Third John 4, in the view of Spurgeon. So too – either positively or negatively – does John's Revelation 2:20-23 and 12:5-17.

'Negatively' too, we say. For in both Old and New Testament, the consequences of neglecting family worship are indeed dire. Compare Exodus 20:4-12; Deuteronomy 12:28-32; Jeremiah 10:25; Zechariah 5:3-5; Revelation 2:20-23. But 'positively' – those who practise family worship, are promised manifold blessings. See: Deuteronomy 6:6-9f; Matthew 6:9,33; Acts 10:2f; First Peter 3:7.

Countless are the passages in Holy Scripture which describe the duties and blessings of household worship. In addition to those already quoted, we could also add: Deuteronomy 29:29; 30:6; 31:11-13; Second Chronicles 20:13; Ezra 8:1-11; Nehemiah 2:43; Job 42:8-17; Isaiah 40:11; 49:22f; 66:12; Zechariah 8:4-7; Mark 10:13-16; etc. But enough!

Daily Family Worship in Church History till the Reformation

It is well known that the Early Church stoutly condemned abortion. Thus: Barnabas; the Didache; Justin Martyr; Tertullian; and the Apostolic Constitutions. Perhaps even more importantly, many of the early Church Fathers – in their own day and age – fully upheld the Old and New Testament practice of daily family worship. Thus, in particular: the Didache, Clement of Rome, the Epistle of Barnabas, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian, the Apostolic Constitutions, Athanasius, Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil the Great, and Jerome of Bethlehem.

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The Apostolic Constitutions enjoined Dinner Prayers. Gregory of Nazianze belaboured the excellence of his parents, and their training of him. Jerome of Bethlehem gave valuable advice to Laeta and to Gaudentius on how to raise their own descendants for Christ. Chrysostom lauded his godly mother, and gave much advice to others on how to raise children – and how to conduct family worship.

Augustine, the "son of tears," praised his godly mother Monica – and enjoined Juliana to hold family worship. Even in the Late-Patristic Age – in spite of the rise and spread of monasticism and celibacy – daily family worship was considered valuable. This continued to be the case – at least until after the beginning of the early mediaeval period, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire to Odoacer's barbarians in 476 A.D.

Family worship thus held its own in the Late-Patristic days of Chrysostom and Augustine. It began to wane, however, with the victory of sacerdotal sacramentalism, clerical celibacy and mediaeval monasticism – from the days of Cassian and Gregory of Rome. Yet even thereafter, wealthy families could always purchase handwritten manuscript copies of the Bible and use them at their household worship (together with their servants and also the latter's families). Compare Genesis 14:13-14 & 18:18-19.

From Augustine's mentor Ambrose of Milan, Bible-reading groups moved northward into the fastnesses of the Italian Alps – in spite of, if not even because of, the rise of the Papacy. Cf. Revelation 12:6-17.

Spreading yet further northwards, the Waldensians in Moravia used the Old Slavonic Bible – even from the ninth century onward. This provided the basis on which the later Jan Huss and his Bohemian Brethren could build.

Also in France, Waldo's 'Poor Men' of Lyons circulated portions of the Holy Scriptures. At least from the twelfth century onward, Romansch and Provencal translations were used not only by their pastors but also by their heads of families.

Probably to some extent under Waldensian influence, Wycliffe's 1384 translation of the Bible into English certainly augured the arrival of the Pre-Reformation. His Lollards in turn then stirred up not only many in England and Scotland, but also influenced especially Huss and his Slavs in Moravia and Bohemia.

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After the invention of printing in 1452, even middle-class families could afford printed Bibles in their own vernacular. Indeed, there were appendices on 'Household Duties' in the Waldensian Catechism as well as in the Bohemian Catechism. In fact, the latter was used by the famous German Protestant Reformer Rev. Dr. Martin Luther himself – as a model for a similar appendix in his own Short Catechism of 1531.

In God's great providence, and also through contact with the Wycliffites and the Hussites, Luther thus emphasized the blessed practice of daily family worship – to the inestimable benefit of all who followed him. Luther had godly parents; himself practised family worship; and advised also others to do likewise. Compare: his Household Prayers; his Short Catechism; his happy family life; and the Lutheran 'form model' for daily family worship.

Especially valuable are Calvin's many comments and sermons on household worship in the families of Adam, Seth, Noah, Job, Abraham, Moses, David, Joel, Daniel, Zechariah, Malachi, John the Baptizer, Mary and Jesus, Cornelius, Paul, Timothy and Titus – and also in the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews. Relevant portions in his Institutes of the Christian Religion – as too the household aspects of his sabbath doctrine – are also germane.

Important too are his relevant remarks about his own household – and about 'our daily bread' in the Lord's Prayer. Then there is the teaching of his Catechism; his remarks anent the catechizing of covenant children; his Baptismal Formula; his several godly Household Prayers; and his Ecclesiastical Ordinances.

Finally, there is his advice to Nicholas Chemin to start holding family worship in his own home. There is also similar material in his barrage of letters to influential leaders throughout Europe (such as De Richebourg and Coligny in France, and even King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth I of England).

The Frenchman John Calvin's doctrine of weekly sabbath-keeping and daily family devotions was spread in England especially by Protestant Reformers like the German Martin Bucer and the Pole Jan Laski (alias John a Lasco). Also Heinrich Bullinger of Switzerland had great influence in Britain – and even upon King Edward VI and his brief successor Queen Jane (Lady Jane Grey). Indeed, even the Heidelberg Catechism (at Q. 103) and the Second Helvetic Confession (at chapters 25 & 29) much influenced both England and Scotland on family worship and sabbath-keeping.

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The French Protestant Admiral Gaspar de Coligny, with whom John Calvin corresponded, set a remarkable example in his daily family worship. The latter was encouraged, implicitly at least, also by the Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula and Marriage Formula and Christian Prayers – and further by the international Synod's Decrees of Dordt (at I:17 etc.).

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There are also the personal letters between Calvin and Cranmer. Perhaps as a result thereof, the Royal Injunctions of Cranmer and Crumwell ordered the clergy in the Church of England boldly to declare "the Ten Commandments" to "all parents and householders" – and also to keep on "exhorting all parents and householders to teach their children and servants."

In Scotland, the 1556 Form of Prayers was published – including 'A Form of Prayers to be used in Private Houses Every Morning and Evening.' Calvin's Scottish student John Knox's Liturgy contained a 'Form of Prayers' to be used in family worship – morning and evening.

Indeed, in his Letter of Wholesome Counsel, John Knox reminded heads of households: "You are ordained by God to rule and govern your own houses in His true fear and according to His Word. Within your houses...you are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants and family are your bishopric and charge.... You must make them partakers in reading, exhorting and in making common prayers – which I would, in every house, were used once a day at least!"

Together with other Scottish Reformers, Knox authored also the First Book of Discipline. In its 11:7-9, it enjoined "every master of household" to "instruct" his "servants and family...in the principles of the Christian Religion.... Every year...every master and mistress of household [is to] come themselves, and their family, before the Minister and the Elders – and give confession of their faith.... Men, women [and] children would be exhorted to exercise themselves in Psalms.... In private houses, we think expedient that the most grave and discrete person [should] use the common prayers at morn and at night – for the comfort and instruction of others."

The Scottish Parliament ordained in 1579 that all householders should have a Bible and Psalm Book in the vulgar tongue, in their homes – for the better instruction of themselves and their families in the knowledge of God. Indeed, the 1590 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland resolved that every head of household in the flock, should buy the same catechism book and read it with his family.

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Further, the Assembly resolved in 1596 (and thereafter) that Elders were to set up the worship of God in the families within their wards. Also the Minister of the Word was directed to ask, during pastoral visits in the homes: "Whether God be worshipped in the family – by prayers, praises and reading of the Scriptures?" He was to ask the household servants (if any): "Whether they attend family and public worship?" He was also to determine: "If there be catechizing in the family?" Even the merry infidel Robbie Burns's poem *The Cottar's Saturday Night* – written some two centuries later – evidences just how fruitful this resolution was!

The famous Irish Articles of that dedicated family-promoting Puritan, Rev. Archbishop Dr. James Ussher – which encourage the reading of the Bible by all, and regard infant baptism as agreeable with the Word of God – form the basis of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Indeed, also many of the other commissioners to the Westminster Assembly were known to be zealous practitioners of daily family worship – and some even wrote tracts thereon.

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Thus, in the Early Church, daily family worship thrived in the homes of Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, the Apostolic Constitutions, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine. It was practised by: the Ancient Celtic Church in Britain and France; the Waldensians; Wycliffe's Lollards; Martin Luther; and John Calvin.

It was warmly advocated by the Lutheran Symbols; by the Calvinistic Second Helvetic Confession; and by the Dutch Reformed Standards. It was firmly advanced by John Knox's 1556 Letter of Wholesome Counsel and the 1560 Scottish First Book of Discipline – as well as in the early resolutions of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland's General Assembly. Indeed, it was also reflected by John a Lasco; practised by the great French Admiral Gaspar de Coligny; enjoined by Thomas Crumwell and Thomas Cranmer; and presupposed by the great Puritan Archbishop James Ussher's 1615 Irish Articles.

Daily Family Worship in the Westminster Standards

The Westminster Confession of Faith beautifully summarizes the teachings of Holy Scripture, even as regards daily family worship. Devotions are to be Biblical; intelligible; and explanatory (cf. 1:1-10). All persons should be involved – for all are fallen, and are therefore needy sinners (cf. 6:1-3).

It is with every single member of the covenant home, that the Lord God has erected His promises (7:3). God's Son took on our nature – even in the womb of

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the virgin Mary (8:2). Consequently, even "elect infants, dying in infancy – are regenerated and saved by Christ" the Lord (10:3).

"All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth...to make partakers of the grace of adoption." Thereby "they are taken into the number and enjoy the liberties of the children of God, [and] have His Name put upon them."

They "receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; [and] are enabled to cry [out] 'Abba, Father!'" They "are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him, as by a father." They are "never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption – and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation." 12:1.

Even little "saints grow in grace" (13:3). "Prayer with thanksgiving" is their duty too – for it "is by God required of all men.... Philipians 4:6 & Psalm 65:2."

Indeed, "prayer" and "the reading of the Scriptures...and conscionable hearing of the Word...with understanding, faith and reverence" and the "singing of psalms with grace in the heart" – maintains the Confession – "are all parts of the ordinary worship of God.... First John 5:14; Acts 15:21; Revelation 1:3; James 1:22; Acts 10:33; Matthew 13:19; Hebrews 4:2; Isaiah 66:2; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; James 5:13; Matthew 28:19; Acts 4:42f."

Thus, "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily. Malachi 1:11; First Timothy 2:8; John 4:23; Jeremiah 10:25; Deuteronomy 6:6f; Job 1:5; Second Samuel 6:18-20; First Peter 3:7; Acts 10:2; Matthew 6:11." For "a due proportion of time [is] to be set apart for the worship of God." Westminster Confession of Faith, 21:1-7.

Christian marriage, 24:2, provides "the Church with an holy seed. Malachi 2:15." Indeed, "the Visible Church" – 25:2 – "consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children. First Corinthians 7:14; Acts 2:39; Ezekiel 16:20f; Romans 11:16; Genesis 3:15; 17:7."

Especially in the Christian home, there is to be a "communion of saints." 26:1-2. For the sacraments "put a visible difference" between them "and the rest of the world. Romans 15:8; Exodus 12:48; Genesis 34:14." Indeed, precisely by the sacraments, covenant families are "solemnly to engage" themselves "to the service of God. Romans 6:3f" etc. W.C.F. 27:1.

The Confession (28:1,4,6) then continues: "Baptism is a sacrament...not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the Visible Church, but also

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to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace...and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3f....

"Also the infants of one our both believing parents are to be baptized. Genesis 17:7-9; Galatians 3:9-14f; Colossians 2:11f; Acts 2:38f; Romans 4:11f; First Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15.....

"By the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is...really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in His appointed time. Galatians 3:27 & Acts 2:38-41."

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Also the Westminster Larger Catechism is very relevant. It well illustrates how daily family worship of the entire covenant household, is in fact required by infant baptism.

In Question 156, it asks: "Is the Word of God to be read by all?" It then answers: "Although all are not to be permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation, yet all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves and **with their families**. Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Genesis 18:17-19; Psalm 78:5-7."

The Larger Catechism then continues at its QQ. & AA. 165f: "Baptism is a sacrament...whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the Visible Church and enter into an open and professed **engagement** to be wholly and only the Lord's.... Infants descending from parents either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ and obedience to Him, are in that respect within the covenant and to be baptized. Genesis 17:7-9; Galatians 3:9-14; Colossians 2:11f; Acts 2:38f; Romans 4:11f; First Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Luke 18:15f; Romans 11:16."

This raises the whole question as to 'how...our baptism [is] to be improved by us.' Here, the Larger Catechism (Q. & A. 167) answers: "The needful...duty of **improving** our baptism is to be performed by us all our life long..., by **growing up** to assurance of pardon of sin and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament. Colossians 2:11f; Romans 6:4f; 4:11f; First Peter 3:21; etc."

Now this involves prayer **by all** (Q. & A. 179). Thus we are to learn from the Lord's Prayer "**to draw near to God** with confidence of His fatherly goodness and our interest therein, with reverence and all other **child-like** dispositions," as we "**pray** with and for others...: 'Give us this day our daily bread!' Luke 11:13; Romans 8:15; Matthew 6:11." QQ. & AA. 189 & 193.

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The Westminster Shorter Catechism – compare especially QQ. & AA. 64 & 99-104 – is intended especially for the instruction of children also at family worship. Its 'Preamble' calls it "a Directory for catechising such as are of weaker capacity."

Indeed, its accompanying Address to the Christian Reader (especially Heads of Families) – by forty-four seventeenth-century Puritans, from Dr. Henry Wilkinson through Charles Offspring to Obadiah Lee – makes this clear. As it observed:

"Abel, though dead, yet speaks' – by his example to us for imitation of his faith &c. Hebrews 11:4. So do the examples of Abraham; of Joshua; of the **parents** of Solomon; of the **grandmother and mother** of Timothy; [and] the **mother** of Augustine – whose care was as well to nurse up the **souls** as the bodies of **their little ones**.... Joshua...first began with himself, and then is careful of his **family**." Joshua 1:8; 8:34f; 24:15.

"What a dreadful meeting those parents and masters must have at that Great Day, with their children and servants – when all that were under their inspection shall not only accuse them but charge their eternal miscarrying upon their score! ... If, therefore, there be any spark in you of love to God – be not content that **any of yours** should be ignorant of Him! ... If there be any compassion to the souls of them who are under your care...[and] any respect to **future generations** – labour to sow these seeds of knowledge which may **grow up** in after-times!"

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The Epistle to the Reader (of the Westminster Standards) by the Puritan divine Rev. Dr. Thomas Manton – the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell's Chaplain – issued similar warnings. "How careful should Ministers and parents be to train up young ones whilst they are yet pliable...in the knowledge and fear of God – and betimes to instil the principles of our most holy faith, as they are drawn into a short sum in catechisms!"

Manton continued: "Would parents but begin betimes, and labour to affect the hearts of their children with the great matters of everlasting life! ... Then, one pastor need not be put to do the work of two or three hundred or thousand governors of families.... Nor should we have need to shut out so many from Holy Communion, upon the account of ignorance...."

"We should entreat all Christian families to take more pains in this necessary work, and to get better acquainted with the substance of Christianity.... I know not what work should be fitter for their use, than that compiled by the

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Assembly at Westminster – a Synod of as godly, judicious divines...I verily think as ever England saw....

"I do therefore desire that all masters of families would first study well this work themselves, and then teach it their children and servants.... First, let them read and learn the Shorter Catechism; and next the Larger; and lastly read the Confession of Faith!"

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The Westminster Assembly's Directory for the Public Worship of God exhorted all that can, to acquire and to learn to read the Bible. It states that preaching must be so plain that even "the meanest may understand."

It also insists that covenant children of believing parents are "Christian and federally holy before baptism." Indeed, it further urges such parents "to bring up the child in the knowledge of...the Christian religion."

It lets the parent "know the danger of God's wrath to himself and child, if he be negligent." It insists that every Christian family should hold an account together of the Sabbath sermon. Indeed, it also requires the daily "singing of psalms together...in the family."

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Daily household devotions were upheld also by the then-contemporary Church of Scotland. Thus the 1547 Directory for Family Worship of the Puritan Presbyterian Church of Scotland, insisted that the "private worship of families be pressed and set up" – so "that, with national reformation, the profession and power of godliness both personal and domestick be advanced." Pastors were "to press persons of all sorts to perform this duty **morning** and **evening**.... But also, it is incumbent to the **head of every family** to have a care that both [they] themselves and all within their charge be **daily** diligent herein" – on pain of being banned from the Lord's Table.

Then there was its 1548 Solemn Acknowledgment of Publick Sins and Breaches of the Covenant. Since that time, there is also its Sum of Saving Knowledge or Brief Sum of Christian Doctrine Contained in the Holy Scriptures and Holden Forth in the Aforesaid [Westminster] Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

The above-mentioned Directory for Family Worship insisted that it is "most necessary...morning and evening" that "the head of every family...and all within their charge be daily diligent herein." Also, its very important Preamble

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resolves that each "head of the family" who continues "to neglect family worship...be...debarred from the Lord's Supper...till he amend."

The Acknowledgment bemoaned the fact that "ignorance of God and of His Son Jesus Christ prevails exceedingly in the land.... The greatest part of masters of families...neglect to seek God in their families and to endeavour the reformation thereof.... Few of our nobles and great ones...could be persuaded to perform family duties themselves and in their own persons; which makes so necessary and useful a duty to be misregarded." Yet true religion would thenceforth be promoted against all error, heresy and schism – namely: Independency, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Arminianism and Socinianism."

Its Sum of Saving Knowledge, after grounding itself in the Triune God and His image Adam and Eve as "the root of all mankind," insisted that "the Word of God" and "prayer" are "to be **daily** drawn forth" by "governors" – as required by "the Moral Law...to the world's end.... Matthew 5:16-20." Believers are also required "to grow in the **daily** exercise thereof....

"Second Peter 1:5-8 [cf. 2:5 & 3:6-9].... Brotherly kindness...keepeth estimation of...all the **household** of faith." Accordingly, "every watchful believer...**daily** employ[s] Christ Jesus for cleansing his conscience...except I would deceive myself and perish!"

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Daily family worship thus thrived: in the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith; its Larger Catechism; its Shorter Catechism; and its Directory for the Publick Worship of God. These were summarized in the Sum of Saving Knowledge. The details of such household worship were set out particularly in the 1547 Directory for Family Worship of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Indeed, the hideous transgression of the duty anent requiring daily family worship was repented of publically – in the 1648 Solemn Acknowledgment of Publick Sins and Breaches of the Covenant – by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

All of the Westminster documents were commended in the Address to the Christian Reader (and especially Heads of Families) by some of the Puritans contemporary to the Westminster Assembly. This was also done by Cromwell's Chaplain the famous theologian Rev. Dr. Thomas Manton, in his own Epistle to the Reader (of the Westminster Standards).

In passing, one may further note that this same teaching is also found in the writings of the Westminster divines William Gouge and Daniel Cawdrey.

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Indeed, it was further advocated by their more famous contemporaries – Rev. Dr. John Owen and Rev. Dr. Richard Baxter.

Recent Examples of the Blessings of Daily Family Worship

Quite a lot was said about godly household worship in the homes of Philip and Matthew Henry. Something was then said also about daily family devotions in the life and theology of the parents and of the children of Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Witsius; about the American family worship of the Members of the First Church in Dorchester during 1677; and the injunctions to practise this as laid down by the 1733 Synod of the Presbyterian Church in America.

During the 1735-43 Great Awakening, Rev. William Tennent and his four sons preached on the importance of Christian homes in promoting revival. Indeed, when in America, the great Evangelist George Whitefield even denied the possibility of sustained religious growth – without a prior revival of family worship.

French-American Huguenots and Scots-Gaelic Presbyterians in the New World stood firm for faithful family worship – against the 'conventicle' system of the Moravians. Yet the latter – via Wesley's Arminianism – increasingly invaded the New Light Synod. Indeed, in his Farewell Sermon, Jonathan Edwards firmly warned his congregation against the dire dangers of neglecting family worship.

With the creation of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. during 1787, the American Presbyterian Directory for Worship declared that "it is the indispensable duty...of every family by itself...to pray and worship God... Family worship...ought [therefore] to be performed...by every family...morning and evening."

It "consists in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and singing praises.... We highly disapprove of...admitting strangers into the families, except when necessity or charity requires it." Indeed, the Directory further disapproved of "any other practices...if they interfere with the above important and necessary duty."

Family worship was marginalized by the advance of an individualistic Arminianism. Indeed, there was also a further decline of regular household devotions through the increasing misuse of Sunday Schools. Such then were at first set up only for orphans and delinquents. However, they soon became utilized especially by the children of Church Members. Nevertheless, it was particularly Presbyterians that continued to advocate daily family worship.

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It was especially in the South that they upheld the practice. There, even on plantations, it was usually conducted so as to involve also the slaves and their families. Genesis 14:13f; 15:2-7; 17:12-27; 18:18-19; 24:1-7; 26:1-5; 35:1-20.

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Something was then said about godly family worship in the homes of Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander and his son Rev. Professor Dr. James Waddell Alexander; Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge and his son Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander Hodge; and of Rev. Professor Dr. B.M. Palmer. The same was seen also in the homes: of the ancestors and descendants of Rev. John G. Paton, Australia's Pioneer Missionary to Tanna in the New Hebrides alias Vanuatu; in the homes of the ancestors and descendants of Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray, Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa; and in the homes of the former Netherlands Prime Minister, Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. and of his sons Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr. and Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper.

In was then noted that the 1956 Australian Presbyterian Book of Common Order provided useful marriage formulas, blessings for a new home, and morning and evening prayers. The American Baptist Rev. Dr. John R. Rice wrote an important chapter on 'Family Worship' in his famous 1960 work *The Home*. Also the former British (and later Australian) Presbyterian Rev. Iain H. Murray – in his 1971 *Banner of Truth* book *The Puritan Hope*, explained the family worship of his father.

The Presbyterian Church in America's 1975 Book of Church Order required daily family worship, and enjoined especially the Elders to promote it in the homes within their wards. Also the National Church Association of the Church of Scotland, in its 1977 Reformed Book of Common Order, gave hints on how to hold family worship – together with the famous Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne's outlines therefor.

We then drew attention to a whole spate of American publications on daily family worship appearing since 1989. Such included reprints of works by George Whitefield, Merle d'Aubigne, J.W. Alexander, B.M. Palmer, and B.M. Smith. Such also include fresh works – by Rev. Professor Dr. D.F. Kelly of Reformed Theological Seminary (in Mississippi), and by K. Ptacek of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (in South Carolina).

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The well-known Australian Presbyterians, Rev. Dr. J. Graham Miller and Rev. Principal-Emeritus Professor Dr. Harold J. Whitney, are both proponents

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of daily family worship. Both of them encouraged the present author to proceed toward publication of his own D.Min. dissertation – on *Daily Family Worship: Household Devotions Each Morning and Evening as a Chief Means of Church Revival*.

A summary of it appeared in the chapter 'Revival and Daily Family Worship' – in the book *Revive Your Work, O Lord!* – published in 1991 by the Committee on Training for the Ministry of the conservative General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. More popularly, Presbyterian Church Supplies of the Queensland Presbyterian Church publishes an annual booklet encouraging daily household devotions. See, for example, its 1995 *Book of Family Worship*.

Attention was then drawn to my great-grandfather the fiery preacher George Jameson, and the lapse from daily family worship by his daughter Elizabeth Jameson Lee and her son (my father) William Sydney Lee. The conversion of the latter's son Francis Nigel Lee – the writer of this present work – was then noted. Reference was also made to his resurrection of the family altar in his parents' home, before he left it to get married in 1963. Cf. Malachi 1:11 & 4:4-6f.

His wife Nellie was raised with daily family worship, on her parents' farm. Ever since his wedding, the present writer and his spouse have held household devotions every morning and every evening.

Not one day has passed since the conceptions of their children, when also the latter have not themselves too participated in this daily family worship. Psalm 22:9f & 139:7-17; Luke 1:36-45; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14; etc.

Since their births, the children learned to read the Bible as their very first book – long before going to school. Compare: Second Timothy 1:3-5 and 3:14-16f. Even when tiny (cf. Matthew 21:16), they read one verse of it out loud – at daily family worship – every morning and evening. Isaiah 8:20 cf. 28:13.

This is in addition to personal devotions when alone (Matthew 6:6), as well as in addition to short family prayers before every meal (First Timothy 4:3-5). During daily household devotions over the years, the family has thus covered the entire Bible. Cf. Revelation 1:3 & 22:17f.

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After breakfast, and before leaving home, the father prays a very short opening prayer. Cf. Psalm 119:107. The whole family then sings a small portion of a Psalm (such as 147:1). Cf. James 5:13.

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The father then reads one verse of Scripture out loud – generally from the Old Testament. Cf. Luke 24:27f,44f. The mother next reads the following verse, and the other members of the family in turn then each do the same. Cf. Matthew 19:4f & Luke 1:1-4.

The father then explains the few verses read. Cf. Second Peter 3:16. If the passage is too profound, only one verse (or even less) is thereafter explained. Matthew 5:18. Each family member then says what new thing he or she has learned. Cf. Matthew 13:52 & Acts 8:30-36.

The family then kneels down together. Cf. Psalm 95:6. The father then asks one of them to pray, shortly, for the family's special needs that day. Cf. Nehemiah 1:11 etc.

In the evening, a similar pattern is followed. Deuteronomy 6:6f cf. Psalm 55:17 & Second Samuel 6:18-20. Now the worship can be longer, as there is no need to rush off to work. Cf. Psalm 1:2 & Acts 17:11 etc.

Here, the reading is usually from the New Testament. John 16:13-15 cf. Second Peter 1:13-16 & 3:15f. The portion sung, is from a Scriptural Hymn or Paraphrase. Ephesians 5:18-25 & 6:1-4 & Colossians 3:16-21.

After the explanation of the Scripture – one question and answer of the Catechism is propounded, explained, and then jointly recited. Cf. Proverbs 22:6 margin & First Timothy 6:12f.

Such is our daily family worship. Joshua 24:15. As in all Biblical acts of worship, there are three basic elements. Praise (Psalm 118:15); Scripture (Acts 17:11); and Prayer (Ephesians 6:4,18).

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

Summary

Daily praise of Almighty God is apparently found within the Persons of the Trinity toward One Another – and apparently also as an example for the human family as God's image – both from all eternity, and also during creation week. John 17:5-24; Proverbs 8:12-34; Hebrews 9:14. It is further found at the latter time – and, once again, probably also as an example for man later to follow – among the 'families' of angels. Job 1:4-6f & 38:4-13 *cf.* Ephesians 3:15.

God's images Adam and Eve held daily household devotions, both before and after their fall. Genesis 1:26f & 2:21-25 & 3:8f. So too, regardless as to their motives, did: Cain, Abel, Seth and Enos. Genesis 4:2f & 4:26. It is also found among the households of the Sethites Enoch, Lamech and Noah. Genesis 5:22-31 & 6:9f & 7:1 to 9:11f. Thus Luther, Calvin, Milton, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 21:1-7, Owen, Spurgeon, Andrew Murray, Kuyper, Bavinck and, "suprahistorically" (?!), even Barth.

After the Noachic flood – according to Cyprian, Cyril, Calvin, the *W.C.F.* 21:6, Matthew Henry, Delitzsch, and Bavinck's colleague Renkema – daily family worship is to be found in the household of Job (1:3-5; 2:13; 42:8f). It is also clearly found in those of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Genesis 14:13f; 18:18f; 25:20f; 26:1-25; 35:1-20; 48:1f; 50:23. Thus Calvin, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q. & A. 156; Matthew Henry, and Andrew Murray.

Daily household devotions were re-inforced by Moses. Exodus 10:2; 12:26f; 20:4-12; Numbers 28:2-3; Deuteronomy 4:8f; 6:6-20f; 11:19f; 32:7. Thus Tertullian, Cyprian, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Luther, Calvin, the *W.C.F.* chapters 19 to 21; the *W.L.C.*, Q. & A. 156; Alexander Smith Paterson, Andrew Murray, Keil & Delitzsch, and Geesink.

Joshua (24:15) upheld family worship (thus Matthew Henry and Andrew Murray). So too did the parents of Samson and Samuel. Judges chapter 13 *cf.* First Samuel chapters 1 to 3. Thus Jerome and Chrysostom.

So too did David and his parents. Second Samuel 6:14-20; Psalm 1:2; 22:9f; 55:17; 78:1-8; 118:15. Thus Basil; Calvin; the *W.C.F.* 21:6; the *W.L.C.*, Q. & A. 156; Henry/Gill/Pink; and Spurgeon. So too did David's son Solomon. Psalm 72:1f; 127:1f; 128:3; Proverbs 1:8f; 3:33; 4:1f; 20:7; 22:6; and chapter 31. Thus Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Luther, Calvin, & Matthew Henry.

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The later prophets too stressed this duty. Isaiah 44:1f; 46:3f LXX; 59:19f; Jeremiah 10:25; Ezekiel 16:20f; 43:27; Joel 1:3 & 2:16f; Zechariah 12:12-14; Malachi 1:6-11 & 2:14f. Thus: John Calvin, the *W.C.F.* 21:6; Matthew Henry, and A.S. Paterson.

Indeed, daily family worship was practised in almost every single Jewish home at least from Maccabean times onward. Thus Philo, Josephus and Rev. Dr. Alfred Edersheim. Clearly, then – daily family worship was doubtless followed also in the godly homes of Zacharias-Elisabeth-John, Joseph-Mary-Jesus, Paul of Tarsus, and Lois-Eunice-Timothy. Matthew chapters 1 to 2; Luke chapters 1 to 2; Second Timothy 1:2-5 & 3:14-16f.

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Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, enjoined daily family worship. Matthew 6:11 & Luke 11:3. Thus the *Didache*, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine, Calvin, the *W.C.F.* 21:6; Watson, and Paterson. Indeed, it also seems to be at least implicitly required by many gospel texts. Cf. Matthew 7:11; 13:52; 18:1f; 21:15f; 24:45; 25:35; 28:19; John 21:15f.

The book of Acts is replete with family worship. See 2:38f,46; 5:46; 10:2f; 16:15,30f; 17:11; 18:2f,8f,26; 20:20; *etc.* It is suggested also in Romans (11:16 & 16:5f); in First Corinthians (1:2 & 7:14 & 11:22 & 14:24f); especially in Ephesians (5:18f & 6:1-4 & 6:18); and in Colossians (3:15-21 & 4:2). Thus the *Didache*, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Calvin, and Watson.

Daily family worship was clearly practised by both Paul and his student Timothy. See: Second Timothy 1:3-5 & 3:14-17. This was to be observed also by all Christians whom they instructed. See: First Timothy 2:8,15; 4:3-5; 5:5-10,14; Second Timothy 1:3f & 2:2; Titus 2:3f. Thus Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Chrysostom, Calvin, the *W.C.F.* 21:6, and John R. Rice.

Especially in the Pastoral Epistles, it is clear that particularly Church Officers are to practise family worship themselves – and also to teach it to others. See: Acts 5:46; 20:20,28; First Timothy 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-11; First Peter 5:1-4. So too, however, should all other Christians. Romans 16:1-15; First Timothy 5:8; Philemon 2-16; First Peter 1:21f; 2:2f; 3:1-7,20f; 5:1-4. Thus Origen, Jerome, Augustine, Calvin, and the *W.C.F.* 21:6.

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Also the inspired books of John imply family worship. See his Gospel (21:15), his Epistles (I:2:12f & II:1-13 & III:4) and his book of Revelation (2:20f & 12:5,17 etc.).

* * * * *

Regular household devotions were subsequently advocated by: the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didache*, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Athanasius, Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine. After the eclipse of daily family worship during the Romish Deformation, it was again re-emphasized by the Waldensians and Wycliffe's Lollards and the Hussite Bohemians at the time of the Pre-Reformation.

This emphasis became a torrent, at the Protestant Reformation. Luther, Calvin, the Polish Reformer Jan Laski, the German *Heidelberg Catechism*, the French Admiral de Coligny, Switzerland's *Second Helvetic Confession*, the Dutch *Dordt Standards*, the English Reformers Crumwell and Cranmer, John Knox the Scottish Calvinist, and early Scottish Presbyterian General Assemblies – all insisted on daily family worship.

Thus, the Anglican Prelates Crumwell and Cranmer ordered their clergy in the Church of England to keep on "exhorting all parents and householders to teach their children and servants" *inter alia* also "the Ten Commandments." Indeed, also the Scot John Knox's 1556 *Liturgy* included 'A Form of Prayers to be used in Private Houses Every Morning and Evening' for family worship.

In his *Letter of Wholesome Counsel*, Knox urged heads of households to be 'bishops and kings' in their homes. "Within your houses...your wife, children, servants and family are your bishopric.... You must make them partakers in reading, exhorting and in making common prayers...in every house...once a day at least."

Knox and other Scottish Reformers wrote also their famous *First Book of Discipline*. There (11:7-9), "every master of household" is urged faithfully to "instruct" his "servants and family...in the principles of the Christian Religion.... Men, women [and also] children would be exhorted to exercise themselves in Psalms.... In private houses, we think expedient that the most grave and discrete persons [should] use the common prayers at morn and at night – for the comfort and instruction of others."

Daily family worship was vigorously upheld by the Westminster Assembly (in its *Confession of Faith*, its *Larger Catechism*, its *Shorter Catechism*, and its

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Directory for Publick Worship). Thus, the *Confession* (21:6) insists that "God is to be worshipped everywhere...in private families daily."

The *Larger Catechism* (156) asks the question: "Is the Word of God to be read by all?" It then answers, *inter alia*, that "all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves and with their families."

The *Directory for Public Worship* exhorts spouses "to study the Holy Word of God..., praying much with and for one another." For, it continues, "it is the duty of Christians to praise God...by singing of psalms together...also privately in the family."

Daily household devotions were also upheld by the then-contemporary Church of Scotland. Thus its 1547 *Directory for Family Worship*; its 1548 *Solemn Acknowledgment of Publick Sins and Breaches of the Covenant*; and, since that time, its *Sum of Saving Knowledge or Brief Sum of Christian Doctrine Contained in the Holy Scriptures and Holden Forth in the Aforesaid [Westminster] Confession of Faith and Catechisms*.

Its *Directory* insists that it is "most necessary...morning and evening" that "the head of every family...and all within their charge be daily diligent herein." Its Preamble resolves that each "head of the family" who continues "to neglect family worship...be...debarred from the Lord's Supper...till he amend."

Its *Acknowledgment* bemoans the fact that "ignorance of God and of His Son Jesus Christ prevails exceedingly in the land.... The greatest part of masters of families...neglect to seek God in their families and to endeavour the reformation thereof.... Few of our nobles and great ones...could be persuaded to perform family duties themselves and in their own persons; which makes so necessary and useful a duty to be misregarded." Yet true religion would thenceforth be promoted against all error, heresy and schism – namely: Independency, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Arminianism and Socinianism."

Its *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, after grounding itself in the Triune God and His image Adam and Eve as "the root of all mankind," insists that "the Word of God" and "prayer" are "to be **daily** drawn forth" by "governors" – as required by "the Moral Law...to the world's end.... Matthew 5:16-20." Believers are required also "to grow in the **daily** exercise thereof." Thus: "Second Peter 1:5-8.... Brotherly kindness...keepeth estimation of...all the **household** of faith." For "every watchful believer...doth **daily** employ Christ Jesus for cleansing his conscience...except I would deceive myself and perish!"

Indeed, daily family worship was practised and written about not only by godly Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly such as William Gouge and

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Thomas Goodwin and Daniel Cawdrey. It was advocated in writings also by contemporary Puritans like Henry Wilkinson, Thomas Gouge, Charles Offspring, Matthew Pool, Ralph Venning, Thomas Watson, John Jackson, Obadiah Lee, John Owen, Thomas Manton, and William Baxter – and later by George Whitefield, the Tennent's, and the great Rev. Dr. Jonathan Edwards.

Consequently, later Presbyterians too have all advocated daily family worship – and practised it in their homes. Such include: Revs. Philip and Matthew Henry; the Princeton Theologians Rev. Professor Drs. A.A. and J.W. Alexander; Rev. Professor Drs. Charles and A.A. Hodge; Rev. Professor Dr. B.M. Palmer and B.M. Smith; Rev. Professor Dr. J.H. Merle d'Aubigne'; James and John G. Paton; the Revs. Andrew Murray; the Rev. Drs. Abraham Kuyper; Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne; Rev. Professor Dr. Douglas F. Kelly; Rev. Dr. J. Graham Miller; and Rev. Principal-Emeritus Professor Dr. Harold J. Whitney.

That greatest of all Baptists, Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon championed daily family worship. So too did the famous modern Baptist Evangelist, Rev. Dr. John R. Rice. It was also encouraged: by the 1787 American Presbyterian *Directory of Family Worship*; by the 1956 Australian Presbyterian *Book of Common Order*; by the 1975 *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America; and by the 1979 *Reformed Book of Common Order* of the National Church Association within the Church of Scotland.

It was upheld in the home of the Banner of Truth's Rev. Iain H. Murray, and is being promoted very vigorously by Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Greenville (South Carolina). Indeed, at the beginning of every year, its practice keeps on being encouraged throughout the Continent of Australia by the Presbyterian Church Supplies of the Queensland Presbyterian Church in its annual *Book of Family Worship*.

Certainly this present writer and the members of his own family all regard daily household devotions as far and away the most influential religious factor in their own lives. See his chapter 'Revival and Daily Family Worship' in the book *Revive Your Work, O Lord!* – published in 1991 by the Committee on Training for the Ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. Christians shun daily family worship to their own hurt – or alternatively practise it obediently, to their own incalculable enrichment.

Suggestions

Perhaps, dear reader, you have never before enjoyed the blessed practice of daily family worship – but now seen that God is urging you to start. In that case, the following suggestions are made to help you commence. It is to be

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remembered that just a little each day, is far better than a lot only once a week on Sundays.

At the risk of sounding 'methodistic' we will now propose some 'methods' to assist those who want to commence daily family worship. These are only suggestions, but we believe their implementation – or that of something similar – will prove to be a rich blessing to any home.

* * * * *

First, get these four following books (preferably with copies for each member of your family): *The Holy Bible* (the New King James Version is recommended); *The Psalter* (the 150 Psalms of David set to music); *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* (preferably an edition with Biblical proof-texts); and a good Hymn Book (such as the American *Trinity Hymnal* or the Australian *Rejoice!*).

Second, get your family to bed at a decent hour – preferably before eleven at night.

Third, set your alarm clock for the next morning at fifteen minutes earlier than in the past. Then, next day:

* * * * *

- A.** 1. Get your family up some fifteen minutes earlier than has been usual.
2. Right after eating breakfast together, before leaving the table, let the family head read just one verse from the Bible. We suggest Genesis 1:1.
3. The family head should then ask each member of the household, in turn, what he or she has just learned. Each should answer just for himself or herself, in front of the rest of the family.
4. The family head should then provide each member with a psalter or a hymnbook. It is suggested that the first stanza of Psalm 1 be sung by all.
5. The family head should then pray for the whole household, that God will use each in His service that day – or ask another member to do so.

* * * * *

In the evening, the following daily pattern may prove useful to commence and inculcate the practice of daily family worship.

- B.** 1. Serve the evening meal some fifteen minutes earlier than in the past, or instead lengthen the family time together immediately thereafter.
2. Right after enjoying the evening meal together, before leaving the table, let the head of the household read just one verse from the Bible. John 1:1 is suggested.

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3. The family head should then ask each member of the household, in turn, what he or she has just learned. Each should answer just for himself or herself, in front of the rest of the family.
4. The family head should then provide each member with a psalter or a hymnbook. We suggest the first stanza of the first hymn be sung by all.
5. The family head should then ask the first question in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, of one member of the family. The family head should explain the meaning of the question and, after the answer has been given correctly, he should further explain the meaning of the answer. The entire family should then be asked to give the correct answer in unison.
6. The family head should then ask each member what he or she ended up achieving for the Lord that day. He should then thank God for using them each and all, and petition the Lord to give them a good night's rest – or ask another member to do so.

* * * * *

C. Next morning, **A** should be followed as above, but substituting Genesis 1:2 instead of Genesis 1:1, and Psalm 2 instead of Psalm 1.

D. In the evening, **B** should be followed as above, but substituting John 1:2 instead of John 1:1; Hymn 2 instead of Hymn 1; and Question & Answer 2 of the *Catechism* instead of 1.

E. On the third day, make like adjustments to those suggested in C and D above – and likewise, also as regards the fourth and each subsequent day.

* * * * *

In Exodus 36:3, we read that God's children brought 'free offerings every morning.' Here, the Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry rightly remarks in his famous *Commentary on the Holy Bible*: "We should always make it our morning's work to bring our offering unto the Lord – even the spiritual offerings of prayer and praise, and a broken heart surrendered entirely to God. This is that which the duty of every day requires. God's compassions are new every morning [Lamentations 3:22f], and so should our offerings be – our free offerings."

Mutatis mutandis, the same applies also every evening. Indeed, Daniel's greatest prayer was offered to God precisely at the time of the evening oblation. Daniel 9:3-21 (*cf.* 6:10-13). Again, Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry comments: "The altar was in ruins, and there was no oblation offered upon it. But, it should seem, the pious Jews in their captivity were daily thoughtful of the time when it should have been offered, and at that hour were ready...and desired and hoped that their

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prayer should be set forth before God as incense, and the lifting up of...their hearts...should be acceptable in His sight as the evening sacrifice."

For even Adam and Eve worshipped God together, in the morning and in the evening. Genesis 2:22f & 3:8f. Job's family too worshipped the Lord early in the morning, all the days. Job 1:5. Abraham, the father of all believers, commanded his household regularly to "keep the way of the Lord." Genesis 18:18f *cf.* 14:13f with Romans 4:11 and Galatians 3:6-8 & 3:16-18 & 3:27-29. Moses required home devotions from all of God's covenant people, every morning and every evening. Deuteronomy 6:7f. Too, Joshua (24:15) and David (Second Samuel 6:14-20) similarly complied.

Indeed, the busy David made time to worship the Lord thrice daily – and lifted up his hands in prayer, especially as his evening sacrifice. Psalms 55:17 & 141:2. Fearful of God's curse on those families that do not worship Him (Jeremiah 10:25), the devout Cornelius prayed to God at stated times with all his household – always. Acts 10:2f *cf.* 10:30. Indeed, Jesus Himself – in Matthew 6:11 & Luke 11:3 – taught all His disciples to pray: "Our heavenly Father! ... Keep on giving us, this day, our daily bread!"

May we too, then – with all our household – do likewise! Let us catechize our families, daily, in our homes! Let us then start, and then continue, to worship the Lord – through praise, prayer, and God's Word – morning and evening, every day!

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<i>Westminster Assembly</i>	pp. xi-xii & nn. 513f
<i>Westminster Confession of Faith</i>	p. xii & nn. 12-21,42,82,128,139,220,231,497f, 529f
<i>Westminster Directory for Publick Worship</i>	pp. xii & 513f,518f,529f
<i>Westminster Larger Catechism</i>	p. xii & nn. 13f,41,128,513f,529f
<i>Westminster Shorter Catechism</i>	nn. 10f,129,515f,529f

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF REV. PROFESSOR DR. FRANCIS NIGEL LEE

Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (in Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Though Lee's father was an Atheist, he married a Roman Catholic who raised her son in that faith.

At the onset of the Second World War, Lee's father was appointed by the Royal Navy as Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Lee became a Calvinist; had the great joy of leading both of his parents to Christ; and became a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., Lee attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his ministerial credentials to that denomination; and pastored Congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in New Jersey; Visiting Lecturer at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Ms.; Staley Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; and Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol, Tennessee. He was then the only person in the World serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society and the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States.

Preacher, Theologian, Lawyer, Educationist, Historian, Philosopher and Author, Lee has produced more than 330 publications (including many books) – and also a multitude of long unpublished manuscripts. Apart from an honorary LL.D., he has twenty-one earned degrees – including eleven earned doctorates for dissertations* in Education, Law, Literature, Philosophy and Theology.

* Th.D.: *The Covenantal Sabbath*
Ph.D.: *Communist Eschatology*
D.Min.: *Daily Family Worship*
D.Ed.: *Catechism Before Communion!*
S.T.D.: *Rebaptism Impossible!*
D.R.E.: *Baby Belief Before Baptism!*
D.Jur.: *Women Ministers & Australian Litigation*
D.Litt.: *Holinshed on the Ancient British Isles*
D.C.L.: *The Roots and Fruits of the Common Law*

DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP

Lee rises early; reads God's Word in ten languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the World seven times; has visited one hundred and ten countries (several repeatedly); and also every Continent (except Antarctica). He is in demand as a Promoter of Doctoral Students in Australia, England, Germany, South Africa and the United States. He has lectured and/or preached in all of those countries, as well as in Brazil, Scotland, Korea, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, and Zambia.

A diehard predestinarian, Lee now lives in Australia – where he is the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College. He retires in 2000.

His wife Nellie is in fulltime Christian Service as a godly Homemaker. Their elder daughter Johanna has completed her M.A.; and teaches English, German and Modern History in Brisbane at the Parkridge High School. Their younger daughter Annamarie (B.A. & Dip. Lib. Sc.), whom Dr. Lee baptized as a baby in 1970, was until 1998 Secretary/Librarian at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College, Brisbane, Australia – and has now completed her Dip. Ed. studies to become a Primary School Teacher.