



The Blue Banner

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A WESTMINSTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

Part One

By Richard Bacon

[This is the first in a series of extracts from Pastor Bacon's historical thesis, *A Westminster Bibliography*.]

As much as I would like for it to do so, this present study does not undertake to be a definitive investigation of the Westminster Assembly and its work. Nor does this paper pretend to be able to deal adequately with the tens of thousands of books and pamphlets that were produced while the Westminster Assembly was in session (one estimate claims that over 30,000 titles appeared in London during the 1640's on the subject of church government alone). Either of those tasks would prove to be the work of a lifetime. My interest in this paper is to examine some of the forces that came into play during the Westminster period and perhaps demonstrate how those forces affected the documents which issued from the Assembly.

Therefore, it may seem that some ground is covered more than once. If a particular bit of information bears on both epistemology and hermeneutics and affects not only the *Directory for Worship* but the *Confession* as well, it could be mentioned as many as four times. I have not been so extreme, however. If anything, I have tended to err to the side of not mentioning a fact often enough.

Because many of the subjects with which the Westminster divines worked are once again before the church's eyes — issues of worship and church government to name but two — it is my hope that some of what is recorded here regarding the

Westminster Assembly will be helpful to others today who are struggling with similar issues. Many today seem to think that they are the first to struggle with the problems of church government or family worship or such public worship issues as music, drama, preaching, and how to minister to a virtually illiterate generation. The Puritans not only faced the same or similar problems, they solved those problems with a remarkable ability to apply scriptural principles to specific problems in their church and nation.

I hope in these pages to demonstrate that the divines of the Westminster Assembly solved such difficulties without an appeal to pragmatism. There were political and historical forces at work, to be sure, yet the Westminster documents were not merely political. Chapter two of the thesis will explain some of the political considerations that were used in the providence of God to bring the Assembly into existence.

The Assembly's work was also affected by the epistemology of those present. How do we know what we claim to know? The Westminster Assembly was making truth claims about God, man, church and magistracy. On what basis could the Assembly be so bold as to claim to know the truth about such things? Why are the Westminster documents propositional in form? These questions will be explored in chapter three.

Chapter four may be the most controversial portion

of the entire thesis. That chapter maintains that the differences between the Independents and the Presbyterians in the Assembly were far deeper than mere disagreements over a few incidentals of church government. In that chapter I will supply evidence that the divisions on church polity questions in the Assembly were essentially hermeneutical in nature. The reason the Independents and Presbyterians had differing ideas of church government is that they had differing methods of interpreting Scripture. As those differences became apparent the breach between Presbyterian and Independent became wider until it finally destroyed any possibility that the Assembly could be successful at its assigned tasks.

The latter part of this series will deal in some detail with the history behind the Westminster generated documents themselves. Although most Presbyterians are familiar with the Westminster Assembly's Confession and Catechisms, they are less familiar with the Assembly's *Directory for Worship* and its *Form of Government*. This series will therefore deal with the *Directory* and other lesser known documents in an attempt to make them better known to Presbyterians of this generation.

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The *Form of Government* produced by the Westminster Assembly is treated in chapter seven. Present day Presbyterians, though they are named after their church government, often have little understanding of it. The distinctions and differences between the Independents and Presbyterians in the Assembly often came down to the question of how Christ exercises his authority in his church. The political intrigue practiced by many of the Independent was demonstrated in detail by Philip Nye in the Assembly. When the Independents were unable to utilize reason convincingly, they turned to political intrigue and maneuvering. When the more perceptive divines in the Assembly saw through that subterfuge, the Independents turned finally to the Army to win by force of arms what they could not win by an appeal to Scripture.

At the same time the Presbyterians were being wearied by the Independents in the Assembly they were also being hassled by the Erastians in Parliament. Though a separate document was not produced by the Assembly in its controversy with Parliament, this thesis details the course of the controversy in chapter eight.² The form of Presbyterianism finally established by Parliament was characterized by Scottish commissioner Robert Baillie as a "lame Erastian Presbytery." We will therefore examine the controversy that resulted in

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The importance of the *Directory for Public Worship* will be seen in chapter six. We live in an age in which many Presbyterians, even those who are otherwise conservative and Reformed, have abandoned Reformed principles of worship. Some have strayed so far from Reformed principles that their practices are indistinguishable from Anglican practices.¹ In other churches, PCA worship has as much resemblance to charismatic worship as anything else. It will not do as an answer to these innovations for us simply to assert that our fathers and grandfathers did not worship so. Rather, we must

²Actually, a document was produced in answer to the Parliament. It was called *Divine Right of Church Government by Sundry Ministers of the City of London*. Though the document is otherwise anonymous, it clearly has been written by at least some of the members of the Assembly and follows the order of the nine questions that Parliament put to the Assembly as part of their threatened *præmunire*. *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici: The Divine Right of Church Government* (Dallas, TX: Naphtali Press, 1995).

¹For example, one of the largest churches in the PCA conducts a weekly worship service using the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*.

George Gillespie's landmark answer, *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*. Hopefully, with more and more Presbyterian churches going hat-in-hand to the government for papers of incorporation, a proper Westminster view of the relationship between church and state will prevent the rise of a new Erastianism in this country. As our church's courts and committees seem to be more concerned with limiting legal liability than with proclaiming the whole counsel of God, perhaps we will all benefit from the wisdom and courage of the Westminster Assembly, who withstood the wrath of Parliament in order to maintain, "The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, *distinct from the civil magistrate*."³

Finally, this thesis treats the Westminster Assembly's *Confession of Faith* in chapter nine. Once again, it should be noted that the Assembly's *Confession* has specific importance for Presbyterians at the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Even conservative Presbyterians are presently undergoing an "Identity" crisis.⁴ The reason for the identity crisis is that we are not who we have claimed to be. The *Confession* consists of a series of related propositions. Many modern Presbyterians, rather than accepting those propositions at face value and either confessing them or repudiating them, prefer to hide behind a vague "system" which is capable of change with every meeting of a church court.⁵ A clear understanding of the *Confession of Faith* is therefore critical for modern Presbyterians.

My opinion is very similar to that of PCA pastor Tony Dallison, who wrote,

One reason for the revival of interest [in the Puritans] is no doubt due to the similarity of our own times to those of the Puritan era. Our twentieth century has been convulsed by wars and revolutions, the rise of totalitarian regimes and the threat of nuclear warfare. It is haunted by the prospect

³*WCF*, XXX:i, emphasis added.

⁴Tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement is hereby made of the *Proposed Statement of Identity for the Presbyterian Church in America*.

⁵See, for example, John Frame's discussion of subscription to creeds in his *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, "The 'system,' then, is redefined for every specific case. The 'system' means what a particular session, presbytery, or general assembly says that it means." (p. 309) This writer finds such a position indistinguishable from the "implicit faith" required by adherents of the Roman Catholic system.

of the end of the world through famine, overpopulation, exploitation of the limited resources of the planet, the upsetting of the delicate balance of ecology....

The Puritan era, too, was a period of great upheaval and uncertainty. The Turkish Empire, though on the decline, still posed a threat in the background to Christendom. The influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe had but recently been destroyed. There was widespread uncertainty and unrest. These were exciting times for the newly liberated Protestant Churches to discover their identity and to become established in theology and church polity.⁶

It was the generation following that of Shakespeare, Spencer, and "rare Ben Jonson."⁷ It was the generation of Milton and Hobbes. That which had been was rapidly passing from view and that which would be was yet on the horizon — a cloud the size of a man's hand.

It was an age of aristocrats and levellers, of gentlemen and soldiers, of preachers and pirates. In short, it was the age of the Puritans.

Civil war gripped England — not a regional conflict such as was experienced in this country from 1861 to 1865 — but a conflict between King and Parliament, with the issue nothing less than the divine right of kings. It was an age of aristocrats and levellers, of gentlemen and soldiers, of preachers and pirates. In short, it was the age of the Puritans.

What a strange generation of men those Puritans were! If the generation previous to theirs is known for its plays and sonnets, then the Puritans of the Stuart monarchies must be known for their sermons and their scientific treatises.⁸ The Puritans were very much concerned about this present world — but in a scientific more than an artistic way. They studied the logic of Peter Ramus and conducted university classes as much by debate as by lecture. For the Puritan mind, the key to learning was making the right distinctions — and that involved first asking the right questions. The more precise the thought, the more useful they regarded it to be. Unlike twentieth century men, they saw nothing incongruous about

⁶A. R. Dallison, "Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1645): A Theology of Hope," *EQ*, (April-June 1978), 86.

⁷Ben Jonson's epitaph at Westminster Abbey, where he is buried, reads simply, "O Rare Ben Jonson."

⁸John Milton seems to be the "exception that proves the rule" in this case.

designing telescopes in the morning and burning witches in the evening. They did both to the glory of God. Puritanism as the extension of Calvinism that it was, was far more than a view of justification by grace through faith. Puritanism was far more importantly about discipline and obedience. It was thus firmly anchored in this-worldly endeavors; it appropriated worldly means to pursue godly ends: magistracy, legislation, and even warfare when necessary.

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Like Cervantes' knight errant, the Puritans had a basic distrust of the age in which they lived. Unlike the man of LaMancha, however, the Westminster divines did not see the golden age as recently past, but as soon coming. The more radical element within the Assembly may even have confronted windmills and jousting with giants.⁹

Christopher Hill, professor at Balliol College of Oxford University in England, has written numerous books on the seventeenth century.¹⁰ He acknowledges in his *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution*,

The body of ideas which has to be called 'Puritan,' for want of a better word, was a philosophy of life, an attitude to the universe, which by no means excluded secular interests.... Puritanism in the seventeenth century was not in the narrow sense restricted to religion and morals, any more than science or history were narrowly 'secular' subjects.¹¹

Because men of such integrity and courage as the Puritans often influence not only their own generation but generations to come as well, there is a danger of viewing them as a monolithic group and failing to

⁹The Puritans contended against the Stuart monarchy. Whether they jousting against windmills or giants depends upon how one views the world. In the view of many in the Assembly they fought against Antichrist himself.

¹⁰See bibliography for a partial list.

¹¹Christopher Hill, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution*. (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1980), 293.

notice their differences. There were clearly differences among the men meeting at Westminster and one of the purposes of this thesis is to demonstrate that the Assembly did not always reach unanimity with respect to their practical writings.¹²

Dr. Kitson Clark in *The English Inheritance* admits, "Though Puritanism plays a very important part in the development of the English heritage it is extremely difficult to give a precise meaning to the word itself.... It is applied [by historians] to a very large number of different people and it is difficult to find a common denominator."¹³ While admitting that before 1640 the term referred to those who attempted to "presbyterianize" the English church in the manner of Field and Cartwright, Basil Hall is finally forced to the conclusion that the term "puritan" is very difficult to define.¹⁴

Most Presbyterians are familiar with the fact that the Westminster divines wrote a confession of faith. Many are even aware that those same men wrote some catechisms — some may have memorized the *Shorter Catechism*. Few today, however, are aware that other writings were produced by the Westminster Assembly as well. Yet as Methodist Daniel Curry wrote nearly a century and a half ago, "The Assembly's chief value can be appreciated only by those who trace the hand of God in the affairs of men, overruling and directing them to advance the Redeemer's kingdom. Thus viewed, that Assembly appears as a point at which were collected the germs of the religious interests of unborn generations."¹⁵

The Westminster Assembly wrote a "liturgy" known as the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*. Additionally they composed a guide for family devotions called *Directory for Family Worship*. Finally, the Assembly set forth a system of church government in their *Form of Presbyterial Church Government*.

The last mentioned document was by far the most

¹²I am here distinguishing "practical" from "doctrinal," not because they are opposed to one another, but because one is the practice of the other.

¹³Kitson Clark, *The English Inheritance*, (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 103.

¹⁴Basil Hall, "Puritanism: the Problem of Definition," *Studies in Church History*, II, ed. G. J. Cuming, (Camden, NJ: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), 294.

¹⁵Daniel Curry, "Westminster Assembly of Divines," *MQR*, XXX (October 1848), 577.

difficult to produce because two major controversies surrounded it. The Independent controversy began in January 1643/44.¹⁶ The last meeting of the Committee of Accommodation took place on March 9, 1645/46 when the Committee handed in to the whole Assembly its long and elaborate answers to the Independents. That report, known now as *The Grand Debate*, essentially ended the Independent controversy without a settlement. From that moment onward, the controversy ceased being a debate of principle and casuistry and became instead a quest for political power.¹⁷ The Erastian controversy began — or the first intimations of it surfaced — at about the same time, on January 8, 1643/44. Essentially, the Erastians in the Assembly wanted to take church discipline and censures away from the church proper and give that authority to the civil magistrate.¹⁸

Most of the church polity issues with which many pastors and elders in the PCA struggle were addressed by the Westminster Assembly; some of the issues were addressed by the Assembly and other issues were addressed by its members interacting with the various proceedings and documents of the Assembly. The PCA could save itself a lot of “reinventing the wheel” by becoming familiar with the debates over church polity that took place in the Westminster Assembly.

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¹⁶At the time the Westminster Assembly met, the new year began March 25th and was called the parliamentary year. Present calendars regard the new year as beginning January 1st. To ease in understanding what year is intended, I follow the convention of listing the year the contemporary documents list followed by a slash and the year we would presently understand it to be.

¹⁷W. M. Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Edmonton, AB: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991 reprint of 1856 edition), 225-56. Hereafter *Hetherington*.

¹⁸Whether Erastus himself would have been regarded as Erastian by Westminster Assembly terminology is questionable. See the chapter “Erastus and Erastianism” in John Figgis' *Divine Right of Kings*. (Cambridge: University Press, 1914.) However, it is not the question this paper treats. We follow standard usage in referring to this controversy by the name “Erastian.”

In an attempt better to avoid confusion throughout this paper, we should clarify some distinctions and terms that we will be using with regularity. The Puritans were a disparate group of ministers in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who wanted to see a further reformation in the polity and practice of the church(es) in England. Within the general heading of “Puritans,” one could find both Conforming and Non-conforming Puritans. Under the rubric of “Conforming,” one could find both Presbyterian Puritans and Episcopal Puritans. The Presbyterian Puritans were characterized by their commitment to church rule by means of synods. Episcopal Puritans were characterized by the idea that the Minister in a congregation should not only be the exclusive administrator of the Word and Sacraments, but should also be the chief governor in the church. Some of the Episcopal Puritan members of the Westminster Assembly believed the Minister should be the only governor or ruler in the church, while others allowed a subordinate role to “lay elders.”

The Non-conforming, or Separatist, Puritans could also be further subdivided into “Independents” and “Sectaries,” though the distinction is not always so clear.¹⁹ The Independents who were members of the Westminster Assembly tried for some time to distance themselves from the more radical Separatists. The most radical Separatists, known as “Sectaries” in London of the 1640's, were much closer to those groups we today call “cults” than they were to the (mostly) orthodox Independents. The Sectaries during the days in which the Westminster Assembly sat included groups that denied the Trinity, Ecclesiastical Communists, Familists, Quakers, Anabaptists, and others. The Scottish Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, Robert Baillie, stated of the London of 1646:

A few persons having locked themselves up within the narrow confines of one Congregation, with an Independent power, having made themselves uncontrollable by any or all upon earth; they open a wide doore to any erroneous spirit, to mislead them towards whatever fancie can enter into any cracked brain, without all possibility of any effectual remedy; ...²⁰

¹⁹See *infra*, chapter 3.

²⁰Robert Baylie, *A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time*. (London: Samuel Gellibrand, 1646), 112. Various documents from the period have this commissioner's name spelled

From a practical standpoint, it eventually became impossible for the Independents to continue to distance themselves from the other Separatists. As the attempts at accommodation between the Presbyterians and the Independents within the Assembly broke down, the Independents turned from Parliament to Oliver Cromwell and his New Model Army for support for their cause. However, by the time they began making their appeals to the New Model Army, the Army had been infiltrated by so many Sectaries that the Independents found themselves in the position of having to ask for government toleration not only for their orthodox, though Independent, churches; they had to ask for toleration for the wildest of the Sectaries as well in order to gain their support. Puritanism provided the theological background and even much of the epistemological background for the Independents, but hermeneutically they were actually more aligned with the Sectaries. Of course, from the standpoint of church polity, the Independent eventually had to grant the same toleration for the Anti-trinitarian that he claimed for himself.

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In summary, to the Conforming Puritan the unity and uniformity of the national church were matters of great importance — even fundamental issues. The Non-conforming Puritans could only claim for their assemblies the right of either granting “fellowship” to kindred assemblies or withholding their “fellowship” from those they deemed unworthy. They did not regard the unity of the national church under a single ecclesiastical court system as either necessary or even desirable. They therefore called upon Parliament to grant universal toleration of every sect, but each sect was to be the judge of its own limits of “fellowship” or ecclesiastical toleration. Ω

differently — usually Baillie — but “Baylie” is the spelling contained in this particular work. Hereafter *Dissuasive*.

HAUGHTY EYES

A Sermon from Isaiah 2:10-22 by
Richard Bacon

Isaiah 2:10-22. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

In the section immediately preceding this passage, verses 6 through 9, Isaiah was chiding Judah and Jerusalem. They emulated the sins of the children of strangers. God set them apart; yet they imitated the ways of the heathen. God gave them oracles; yet they sought after the seers of the Philistines. God was to be a trust to them; yet they cast away their trust in him to hope in the gods of their neighbors. God was to be the object of their worship; yet they turned from true worship to the idolatry of the nations around them. God made them an honorable people; and they cast away their honor along with everything that made them honorable.

In verses 10 through 22, Isaiah described the desolation that results from being forsaken. Then he told Judah and Jerusalem that God had forsaken *them*

because of their sin. Isaiah then prophesied that *because* God had forsaken them, they would be desolate.

Any Scripture has only one specific meaning. The reference in this context is to the Chaldeans destroying Judah. Just as Isaiah prophesied, the Babylonians did invade, destroying first Judah then the city of Jerusalem. Judah and Jerusalem *were* made desolate. However, there is also a further aspect to this prophecy. Often what we see in the case of a prophecy is God setting forth a condition. Whenever the condition is met, the consequence will come to pass. That does not mean that there are two specific meanings to a passage of Scripture. When it is prophesied that disobedience will bring a curse, then every time that act of disobedience occurs, so will the curse. We must make this clarification so that, when we state that this prophecy was fulfilled in Isaiah's day, and then explain there was also an application when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, and then add that there is an application for us today, we understand we are not referring to a "manifold interpretation." This prophecy came to pass when the Chaldeans destroyed Judah and Jerusalem. There is also a sense in which it came to pass in the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Further, it is a warning to us today.

A prophecy is often God "setting forth" a warning. This is a general method that God uses to awaken and humble proud sinners. If we understand the general principle that is involved, then we will be able to apply it to a variety of historical circumstances, including our own.

God's Word applies to every area of our lives. It speaks to the realms of economics, civil government, morality, as well as every other aspect of culture.

The church today has lost much of her ability to "prophesy" to her generation. We *refuse* to speak with the authority of "Thus saith the LORD!" It is my contention that the main reason we do not speak with that authority is because we do not understand the principles of God's Word. God's Word applies to every area of our lives. It speaks to the realms of economics, civil government, morality, as well as every other aspect of culture.

The church today has what may be termed an *enclave* mentality. The French lost the war in Indochina by retreating into enclaves. Instead of taking the war to the enemy, they withdrew and the enemy brought the war to them. That is what the church in the twentieth century has done. We have not taken the battle to the enemy. We have been retreating into pietistic enclaves waiting for the Lord to come and rescue us. The greater part of evangelical Christianity has been doing that for the last one hundred years or more. What we *need* to do is startle and awaken secure sinners. If those secure sinners are in the White House, they need to be startled and awakened. If they are in the state house, they need to be startled and awakened. If the magistrate is guilty of sin, then we need to tell him he is guilty of sin. We need to begin taking the war to the enemy. We need to carry the gospel to our generation. We need to start calling sin "*sin*."

The first thing we need to do as we carry the gospel to our generation is startle and awaken *secure* sinners.

In Isaiah 2:10, sinners were entering into the rock and hiding in the dust. Why were they entering into the rock? Why were they hiding in the dust? Why were they going into holes and caves in verse 19? *For the fear of the LORD!* There is little fear of the LORD in the church today. The church has turned the "good news" of the gospel into the "nice news." We have turned God into a nice old guy. He is not truly upset with *anybody* over *anything*. He is *so* patient. He is *so* loving. He is *so* nice. He would not *dare* be upset with *us*. But that is not the God of which Isaiah spoke in this passage! Nor is it the God of which Jesus Christ spoke in Matthew 23:15. In that passage Jesus warned the religious leaders of his day, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees. You are making people twice the children of hell that you are!"

Isaiah tells us that the reason the people were going into the holes and the caves was for *the fear of the LORD*. The reason they were hiding in the dust was *for the fear of the LORD*. One of the problems with the preaching, the "prophesying," we hear in the church today, is that too many are preaching that our problem is simply a poor self-image. The church tells us we have too low a view of ourselves. No! That is not the problem. The problem is that we have too low a view of *God*! We do not recognize God for who he

is. When we have the esteem for God we ought to have, the Bible calls that proper esteem “the fear of the LORD!” When sinners catch the fear of the LORD, *they hide*. There are only two things you can do when you fear the LORD: you can flee *to God* for refuge or you can flee *from God* to hide from his wrath. Either you will come *to God*, depending upon his mercy; or you will flee *from God*, hiding from his judgment.

The church tells us we have too low a view of ourselves. No! That is not the problem. The problem is that we have too low a view of God!

The church talks about people being saved, but what is it people are being saved *from*? They are being saved from the judgment of God!

If we do not prophesy of the judgment of God, we cannot say we have the gospel. If there is no judgment, then there is no salvation. If there is no justice, then there is no mercy! That idea is the very *key* as to who Jesus Christ is. In Christ, the justice and mercy of God have kissed. The judgment and righteousness of God have come together in him. We must preach the judgment of God. We must preach the justice of the Lord. If we do not prophesy to this generation about the righteous commandments and requirements of God, then how dare we say we have the gospel? As the church preaches the glory and the majesty of the Lord, the Word of God will inspire fear.

There is no escape from God's wrath. Wherever the men in this passage fled: whether they went to hide in the dust, or whether they went to the tops of the rocks, there was no hiding from God's wrath. They tried to hide from God in the things of the earth. But the things of earth are all subject to being shaken. God can shake whatever he will, even the earth itself.

The most powerful man in the world could be humbled tomorrow. How long did it take God to humble Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful man on the face of the earth? It only took a moment. There stood Nebuchadnezzar on the ramparts of the city, boasting of all the glorious works of his hands. The next day he was eating grass with the cattle.

The mighty of our day should *want* to hide from the Lord. But as long as the church is preaching the

gospel she has been preaching, there is nothing from which to hide. When the church begins to preach the *true* gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the wicked will flee. When the wrath of God is preached, the wicked will be humbled. They will tremble with the fear of the LORD. Then they will either glorify God and say with Nebuchadnezzar that God does whatsoever he will in heaven and upon the earth, or they will flee from him, like those in this passage, to hide in the rocks and the caves.

The things of earth are subject to being shaken and the shaking of the earth is a terrible thing for those whose affections are on the earth. If you love the things of the earth, I have some bad news for you: you cannot keep them. You *cannot* keep them! You can *have* them. You can *gain* them. You may even be able to *enjoy* them after a fashion. But they will not satisfy. Once you have them, they will not satisfy you. A greedy man always “needs” a little more than he has! He continues searching for something that will not be shaken. We must not set our affections on the things of the earth. We must not set our affections on the things of this life. If we depend upon the things of this present life to *satisfy*, we will find only heartbreak; for the things of this life will be shaken.

We must not set our affections on the things of this life. If we depend upon the things of this present life to satisfy, we will find only heartbreak; for the things of this life will be shaken.

Not only can the things of this life afford no satisfaction, neither can the things of the earth afford any protection. Even as the men fled for their rocks and their caves and their crevasses to hide in the dust, God found them. They could not hide from the wrath of God.

This was not merely a doctrine of the Old Testament church. In Revelation 16:19 we read of God forcing the nations to drink the wine of his *wrath*. Jesus Christ, the rider on the white horse, goes forth conquering and to conquer the nations. In Revelation 19:11-15, he goes forth with a sword proceeding from his mouth, the blood of his enemies splattering up on his garments. The blood of his enemies drenches his garments. If they refuse be sprinkled by *his* blood,

then his garments will be sprinkled by *theirs*.

Not only does the gospel speak to startle and awaken *secure* sinners, it also speaks to humble and abase *proud* sinners.

Look at verses 11 and 17 of Isaiah 2, “The lofty looks of man shall be humbled...” The phrase, “lofty looks” in the Hebrews is “lifted-up eyes.” It is the same attitude we today might call “looking down one’s nose.” “The lofty looks of man shall be humbled.” That will happen when men bow down before the Lord Jesus Christ. God will bow men’s knees and humble their lofty looks. “And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.” Once again, man’s problem is not that he thinks too lowly *of himself*: his problem is that he thinks too lowly *of the Lord*.

Verse 17 has the same refrain. It is so important that Isaiah says it *twice*. “And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”

Many today seem to think that the day of the Lord is a day on which they will go to the top of a mountain and wait to be raptured. That is not what “the day of the Lord” means in Scripture.

The day of the LORD — the technical phrase that Isaiah used in this passage — is a day of *judgment*. It is not a day of escape. Many today seem to think that the day of the Lord is a day on which they will go to the top of a mountain and wait to be raptured. That is *not* what “the day of the Lord” means in Scripture. In Scripture, “the day of the Lord” is a day of judgment. In Matthew 25:32-33, Jesus reported that in that day the Lord will judge the nations and that “he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” Jesus spoke of the day of judgment in Matthew 7:22-23. He said, “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” God does not regard the things of our

imaginations to be works of righteousness, but works of iniquity. The pride of man will fall. Either we will *repent* and be humbled or we will be abased. The Lord alone shall be exalted.

God accomplishes our abasement by humbling judgments. In verse 12 we read, “For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low.” First, God will judge the people themselves. Secondly, he will remove that in which they pride themselves.

Continue reading in verse 13-15, “Upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall.” This terminology does not mean that God is mad at the hills and the trees. The object of God’s wrath was men who lifted themselves up *like* those trees. Isaiah used trees as a figure of speech. God was not upset with trees; God was upset with *people*. God was upset with *sinners*. God was angry at the loftiness of man. God was angry at the fact that men *thought* that they were as strong as the cedars. They *thought* they were as strong as the oaks. They *thought* fleeing to the high mountains would save them. They *thought* that the hills would lift them up. So Isaiah warned them against the things in which they prided themselves.

We see further that Isaiah mentioned their trade and their culture. In verse 16 Isaiah said, “And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.” Was God mad at boats? Was God upset with pictures and with ornaments? No, he is not angry with boats and pictures. He is angry with our trade and our culture. As our trade and culture reflect our *ungodliness*, God will destroy it. How does our trade reflect ungodliness? Look at Texas today. Stores are open on the Sabbath. That reflects an ungodly culture. It is an ungodly trade and God will destroy it. Oil is one of the chief industries of Texas. A few years ago, oil went from nearly \$30 a barrel to \$10 a barrel in a matter of months *when Texas changed its Sabbath laws!* When Texans decided they needed an “extra day” to make money, God took away their money. Texas was a “boom” state! Dallas was a “boom” town! People were making a lot of money until they decided they were wiser than God. They

decided they had to make money seven days a week. Then God took away even the money they thought they had. In Haggai 1:6-9, God warned that he can blow on your purse and empty it of money. That is what he told Haggai. If you worship your purse, God will empty it. But if we devote our trade to him, God will bless it.

Was God mad at boats? Was God upset with pictures and with ornaments? No, he is not angry with boats and pictures. He is angry with our trade and our culture.

God not only deals with our trade here in this passage in speaking of “the ships of Tarshish,” but he also deals with our ornaments. “All pleasant pictures” is how it is translated here. We could speak of our fine pictures, or our pretty pictures. This too has to do with our culture. There is nothing ungodly about pictures *per se*, provided they are not violations of the second or seventh commandments. If a picture violates the seventh commandment — “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” — then it is an unlawful picture. It is unlawful for us to have. If it violates the second commandment — “Thou shalt not make any graven images” — then it is a violation of that commandment and it is unlawful to have. Other than that, there is not anything particularly ungodly about pretty pictures. You cannot make pictures of God, and you cannot make pornographic pictures: other than that, we can enjoy the beauty of creation. But once again, when we begin to worship culture *instead* of God, then God's wrath is turned upon us. When our culture becomes more important to us than God, then God will destroy our culture.

... when we begin to worship culture instead of God, then God's wrath is turned upon us. When our culture becomes more important to us than God, then God will destroy our culture.

Today our culture *is* increasingly pornographic. The reason our culture is increasingly pornographic at least in part is that our culture has for one hundred years violated the second commandment in its pictures. It should not surprise us therefore that in this generation of great godlessness there is a

violation of the seventh commandment as well. In what other country would a government pay people to put images of Christ in a bottle of urine and called it “art?” Where could that happen? Yet the church today does nothing because there is a “separation of church and state that cannot be violated.” Nonsense! Yes, the church and the state have two different governments. But we cannot divorce the magistrate, the state, from God's law. God's law applies to *every area of life*. God speaks specifically to the magistrate, and calls him his “minister.” Read Romans 13:1-4, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”

The definition of “good” is God's law. God has already told us what good works consist of: good works consist of performing the works of his law. God has told us what love is: love is the fulfilling of his law (Romans 13:8,10). If we would love our neighbor, we should treat him lawfully. We should do the things that God's law requires of us. If it is the case — and it is — that God's law is the definition of “good” and of “good works;” and if it is the case — and it is — according to Romans 13, that the magistrate is to do good works, what is the magistrate to do? *He is to do God's law*. It is that simple.

Does that mean that we are being brought back under the bondage of the ceremonies? Does that mean that we are under the weak and beggarly elements of the law? I am not suggesting that for a moment. The old covenant ceremonies have passed away. The Old Testament ordinances were nailed to the cross of Christ. No longer must we bring bullocks to Jerusalem. No longer must we sacrifice lambs, putting their blood upon the lintel and door posts of our homes. But the *moral law* applies to every area of life. The law which God *has always required* is still binding. We must never believe that God's moral requirements have passed away. We must never

think that God is now less interested in how we live than he was before the gospel was made manifest in the light of Christ. That is another reason why the church's preaching today is so anemic. The church does not have "the iron in her blood" to speak God's law to our generation.

That is another reason why the church's preaching today is so anemic. The church does not have "the iron in her blood" to speak God's law to our generation.

Finally, the gospel will destroy *idolatrous* sinners.

The Christian church today is overrun with idolatry. There is self-worship. There is will-worship. There is an attitude in which men insist on worshipping God as they choose rather than as God chooses.

Read Isaiah 2:20-21, "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for the fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

We need to become serious about casting away not just idolatry, but idolaters. We need to become serious about really fencing the church. I am not suggesting that we can have a church with a perfect, regenerate church membership. But when we truly "fence" the church from idolatry and idolaters, we are going to find ourselves isolated. When we become truly concerned about the practices of the twentieth century church, we will not have to isolate ourselves: people will leave us alone.

The false gods of Isaiah's day could not even save themselves; how could they save the people who trusted them? If the idols themselves were to be cast into the bats' caves, how were they going to save those who worshipped them?

The false gods of Isaiah's day could not even save themselves; how could they save the people who trusted them? If the idols themselves were to be cast into the bats' caves, how were they going to save those who worshipped them? Singing about the "dew on the roses" will not save the dew on the roses, and

it will not save the people who sing about it. The false gods cannot save themselves, and that implies God's *total victory* over idolatry. Men will either be *reasoned* out of their idolatry or they will be *frightened* out of their idolatry. God said in Isaiah 1:18, "Come let us reason together." God will reason with us. God will explain to us the detrimental effects of our idolatry; but if we will not be reasoned with, he will frighten us out of our idolatry. He will press the fear of the Lord upon us.

God can also make men *sick* of their idols. It was the same men who had worshipped the idols who later cast them into the caves. When we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," one of the things that we should be praying for is that men would grow sick of their idolatry. We should pray that they would cast off their wicked ways. It should be our prayer that God would establish his ordinances in his church.

A few years ago, the General Assembly of the PCA passed a resolution that condemned a whole list of sins of which our generation is guilty. I was not opposed to the resolution, but I was saddened by the fact that all we were stating was that the world was worldly. We should have known that already! The problem is not that the *world* is worldly: the problem is that the *church* is worldly. We need to recognize that we — *the church* — are worldly. *We* need to repent. *We* need to be in sackcloth and ashes. *We* need to be fasting for our sins. *We* need to be casting our idols into the bats' caves. The church must cast off her worldly ways before the world is ever going to listen to her.

Notice that sin may be loathed, yet not rightly. We may think very poorly of sin, yet not repent of it. It is possible for men to hate sin, and yet continue in it. It is a sad sign. It is a bad sign. It is a sign that God has given the sinner over to the dominion of his sin.

God shakes *confident* sinners.

We have examined three things. We saw God startling and awakening secure sinners; humbling and abasing proud sinners; and destroying idolatrous sinners. The last thing we see in this passage is God shaking confident sinners. Look at verse 22, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

If you do not fear God, you will fear man. But if

you do fear God, you have *no reason* to fear man. The worst men can do is kill you. You knew you were going to die anyway. We do not think about it morning, noon, and night. But you know you are going to die. It does not come as a surprise to you. "Man's breath is in his nostrils."

You have no reason to fear man. Who should you fear? Jesus asked this question and I ask it of you. In Matthew 10:28, Jesus said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Who should you fear? Should you fear a man who, after he's done all he can do to you, has only killed your body? Or should you fear the one who can cast both body and soul into hell? *You should fear God!* You should *not* fear man. So cease from man. Cease from placing your confidence in man.

Why was it so important for Gideon's army to be only 300 men? So that God would get all the glory.

If you are going to count strength, count the way God taught Gideon to count. In Judges 7, Gideon was ready to go to battle, but God said, "There are too many of you. We need to reduce your numbers." First he got rid of the faint hearted. Gideon told the army that if anyone did not want to go to war, then he should go home. We should not be afraid to tell people the same thing: "If you are not in it for the long term, just go home." But even that did not reduce the number sufficiently. Gideon's army was finally reduced to 300 men. Why was it so important for Gideon's army to be only 300 men? So that God would get all the glory. "Everyone knows" that an army of 300 could not possibly overcome a Mesopotamian army of 20,000. It is humanly impossible. But it is not impossible with God and when the victory is won, God gets all the glory.

If you are going to count strength, count as Jonathan did. Remember the day he and his armor bearer climbed up the precipice in 1 Samuel 14. It was Jonathan and his armor bearer against a garrison of Philistines. Jonathan said in verse 6, "There is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." God's arm is not shortened. God can save by many or

by few. *God does not count the way the ungodly count.*

No one would think that two men, one of them unskilled in battle, could take on a garrison of Philistines. But God can!

No one would think that two men, one of them unskilled in battle, could take on a garrison of Philistines. *But God can!* Imagine this scene: The Philistines had done away with all the blacksmiths in Israel so the Jews would not have weapons. Jonathan had one of the few swords in all of Israel. There he was with one sword, and his armor bearer bringing up the rear carrying his clothes, chasing a whole garrison of Philistines across the mountains. *There is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few!* If God chooses to bring down an army, then God will bring down an army! If God chooses to raise a work in Rowlett, then *God* will raise a work in Rowlett. All God awaits is a people that will bow the knee to him.

We need to bow our heads before God. If we do not bow our heads in repentance, we will bow our heads in fear and shame. If *we* do not take the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to our generation, who will? We have a greater responsibility because we have the light. We have the knowledge. We have the understanding. We *must* carry the message of God's righteous judgment to this generation. If we do not do it, no one else will. The folks preaching the "nice" gospel will not carry the message. They cannot do it. They do not have the message. It is up to us.

Will God use us? If he does, it is not because he *needs* us. God is not *desperate*. God will not lower his standards. His standards require a holy, righteous people. That is what we must be if we would carry the gospel to this generation. **Ω**

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First Presbyterian had a marathon session recently one Lord's Day, stretching through the SS hour, AM and PM worship services. The pastor asked church members to invite any anti-paedobaptists (not all antipaedobaptists belong to a 'Baptist' church) with whom they had discussed baptism in the last 6 months to a year or so to attend services with them. Then, over the course of the three sessions, Pastor Bacon presented the case for the underlying unity of the covenant in both testaments; the scriptural evidence that circumcision in the OT and baptism in the NT both point to the same spiritual realities; and answers to objections regarding paedobaptism. The final few minutes were spent answering some questions our guests had submitted. The Baptists

who attended found the series thought provoking and very inoffensive in the manner of presentation. In fact one commented that not only did Pastor Bacon present the best statement of the paedobaptist position he had ever heard, but he believed Rev. Bacon had presented the clearest statement he had heard of the anti-paedobaptist position as well.

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2 Chronicles Chapter 3

By Richard Bacon

This passage gives us some detail concerning the building of the temple. We have a more detailed account of this in 1 Kings 6. Please notice a few things about this temple. It must be in the place that David had prepared: not only that David had purchased, but which had become the sign of divine protection for Israel. Remember that at the end of 1 Chronicles we read about the plague that was sent to punish Israel for her sin. It was on this very place where the temple was to stand that the sword in the hand of the angel of death had been stopped. This place had been selected by divine providence.

Notice also that God gave specific instructions for building the temple. There are numerous details we could go through both here and in 1 Kings 6. This should remind us of the details that we read in the book of Exodus when Moses was first given the instructions for the tabernacle in the wilderness. The children of Israel followed a pattern that was given to Moses on the mount and here they followed the pattern given to David and Solomon.

One of the things we can draw from this passage is the particular doctrine that we call the reformed principle of appointed worship. This doctrine of appointed worship is simply the plain reformation doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* as it applies to worship. That is all it is. We are not making something special out of it. We are simply saying that God has given us all the instructions that we need to do every good work. When you take away all the argumentation on both sides, what it comes down to is this: either God has told us everything that we need to do in order to do his will or he hasn't. If we have to add something — if we have to take the decrees of counsels, or the decrees of popes, or the decrees of the minister — then what we have is something that has been added to God's Word. At the point we add anything to God's Word, we are not following the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* or the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture.

There is a more subtle attack going on against the Word of God today. It is not an attack from outside the church: it is taking place within evangelicalism. The battle today is over the sufficiency of Scripture.

A generation or two ago, the attack on God's Word was against the doctrine of inspiration. In the four volume *Fundamentals*, for example, you saw men like Machen, Orr, Warfield and others, defending the inspiration of

Scripture. But there is a more subtle attack going on against the Word of God today. It is not an attack from outside the church: it is taking place within evangelicalism. The battle today is over the *sufficiency* of Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 is a passage that very plainly lays it out for us. Paul told Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Paul said that Timothy knew the Scriptures. Since the New Testament was not available to Timothy, this is obviously referring to the Old Testament. Did Timothy have access to a copy of 1 Samuel where the writing was actually Samuel's handwriting? Did Timothy have access to an autograph? Did he have a copy of the Pentateuch in Moses' handwriting? No! He did not have an autograph, he had an apograph. He had a copy of it. Yet Paul here in 2 Timothy refers to that copy as holy scriptures. So we should be careful when we say that Scripture is inspired in the original autographs. We must not use that as an equivocation for saying that we do not believe what we have today is inspired or sufficient.

We should be careful when we say that Scripture is inspired in the original autographs. We must not use that as an equivocation for saying that we don't believe what we have today is inspired or sufficient.

Look at this Bible in my hand. You know it is a translation and I know it is a translation. But when I stand in this pulpit and read from this Bible week after week, I say to you, "Thus saith the Lord." When I say, "Hear now the very Word of God," even though it is a translation, it is the Scriptures. According to Paul here in 2 Timothy 3, it is the Scriptures. We understand that it is a translation. We understand that it is an apograph. We understand that it is not the original autograph. We do not have Moses' signature at the bottom of it. But we also understand that this is sufficient unto salvation.

Paul went on to say in verses 16 and 17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." [And again, a generation ago that is where the battle was.] "And is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly" [thoroughly, perfectly] "furnished unto all good works." Note again: "Unto all good works." Every good work we must do we can learn about in the Scriptures.

When we look at the building of the temple, then, we realize there was a lot of detail with respect to it. God gave a lot of detail. We do not have that same level of

detail in the New Testament regarding our worship. There are some who say because of that we can just make it up as we go along. There are others who say that the lack of details shows the simplicity of our worship today. There are not a lot of details given. What we are to do is very simple. We are to preach the Word of God. As reformed people, we believe — and this is significant — that when we are in the presence of the reading and preaching of God’s Word, we are in the presence of God. Remember what Cornelieus said in Acts 10:33? “Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” As he invited his friends and his family in to hear the preaching of the Word, he knew he was coming into the presence of God. Not because Peter was there, but because the preaching of the Word was there. We need to understand that as we meet together, we are not simply meeting with one another, but that we are a covenant people meeting with a covenant God to hear his covenant Word.

This is a different view of worship than many today have. But it comes right down to this: *the Bible is sufficient for every good work*. If we believe that, it will affect the way we worship. If the Bible is sufficient for every good work, then we do not need to add things to the worship of God to make it pleasing and acceptable to him. What makes worship acceptable to God is that we

approach him through his Son as he has directed us in his Word.

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