

a sermon from EXODUS 20:12 on The Fifth Commandment:

HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER!

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I. A PROPOSITION

He who honours GOD The Father in Heaven must honour his father on earth; and he who does not know to honor his father on earth shall not know his duty to honor His Father in Heaven!

II. THE TEXT - EXODUS 20:12 - THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. ¹ In The Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: ²

כָּבֵד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יָאָרְכוּן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ¹²

III. DISCIPHERING THE HEBREW TEXT

From the Hebrew text, I offer this transliteration: KABED ‘ET-‘AVIYCHA VE’ET-‘IMMECHA LEMA”AN YA’ARICHUN YAMEYCHA “AL HA’ADAMAH ‘ASHER-[HASHEM]³ ‘ELOHEYCHA NOTEN LACH. ⁴ Literally, “You honour your father and your mother! In order that they are caused to be prolonged the days upon that land which JEHOVAH Your GOD is giving for you!”

Here the command, “You honour!” is given by the verb כָּבֵד CHAVAD as an intensified command, “to honor” or “to glorify.”⁵ Why does GOD with urgent intensity command men to honour and glorify their parents? Within The Covenant between The Almighty and ancient Israel recorded in Holy Scripture, it was first a decree of GOD, and

¹ 1, KJV, EXODUS 20:12.

² 2, BHS, EXODUS 20:12.

³ It is the practice of faithful Jewish people to not pronounce The Name of GOD - יְהוָה - out of reverence for Him, but rather in reading The Sacred Scriptures in The Hebrew to substitute הַשֵּׁם “HASHEM,” which means simply “The Name.” Out of deference to our Jewish brethren, I will follow that practice here throughout.

⁴ In my transliteration of The Hebrew Text, I will represent the letter א aleph = ‘ and the letter ע ayin = “

⁵ 5, BLB Concordance, EXODUS 20:12, verb Strong’s 03513 כָּבֵד CHAVAD, to honor; to glorify, 2nd person masculine singular active piel. The verb is given in an active, intensified and imperative form.

it was second attached to a promise. That promise, that the children of Israel might dwell in The Promised Land given to them by The LORD, is contingent upon their honoring their parents.

In our Passage The LORD is giving by His own loving hand – from the verb נתן NATHAN - The Promised Land to His Covenant People Israel in the present tense.⁶ But the blessings of this giving by The LORD to His people is contingent upon them giving honor to their parents - “...that their days there may be long upon The Land” - from ארך 'ARACH. The verb ארך 'ARACH here means to cause “to prolong [one’s] days; to grow long; to continue long.” This is given in the causative and ongoing form.⁷ First, it is GOD that is doing the giving of the rest in The Promised Land to His people; they do not appropriate that rest by their own authority and power. Second, the days of possession of rest in The Promised Land by the people of GOD are constantly contingent upon their continual and ongoing obedience to This Divine Commandments, the honoring of their earthly parents.

IV. A QUESTION OF HONOR

Why specifically is the dwelling in the place of GOD’s rest for His people contingent upon honouring one’s parents? Because if a man is not righteous enough to honour his earthly father, will he be righteous enough to honour his Heavenly Father? If we would desire to dwell in the blessings and rest which The Almighty gives us from His very hand, we must continually keep His Commandments, which includes “honour thy father and mother!” And if we indeed do give the honour and glory due to our Heavenly King JESUS CHRIST to Him, is it likely that we will fail to render the honour due to our earthly parents? For if a man lacks the first, he will not earnestly be able to give the second!

⁶ 5, BLB Lexicon, EXODUS 20:12, verb Strong’s 05414 נתן NATHAN, to give, qal active participle. The verb here gives us the present tense in Hebrew.

⁷ 5, BLB Lexicon, EXODUS 20:11, verb Strong’s 0748 ארך 'ARACH, to prolong [one’s] days; to grow long; to continue long, 3rd person masculine plural active hiphil imperfect. The sense is that the subject JEHOVAH is continually causing Israel to continue long in The Promised Land; they do not cause themselves to prolong their days there.

Let us note that The First Table of The Ten Commandments contain those First Four Commandments which declare man's duty to GOD, while the Second Table contains Those Second Six Commandments which declare man's duty to his fellow man. The two can not be separated, for if we love GOD, we shall love our fellow man, who - like us - is made in GOD's Image. Nor can we can not truly love our neighbour if we love not The Creator, The One Who is The Source and Measure of All Goodness. So John Wesley observes, "As [true Christian] religion towards GOD ...[is] an essential branch of universal righteousness, so righteousness towards men is an essential branch of true [Christian] religion: godliness and honesty must go together."⁸ Nor may they be divided one from another!

Noah Webster offers us these insights on the meaning of the verb "to honour" from his 1828 Dictionary: Appropriate to our earthly fathers, to honour them means "to revere; to respect; to treat with deference and submission, and to perform ...[one's] duties [due to them]."⁹ The honour due to our earthly fathers is to be as a schoolmaster for us, teaching in some small part what greatest honour is due from us to our Eternal Father GOD in Heaven. Therefore to honour The Almighty is "to reverence; to manifest the highest veneration for, in words and actions; to entertain the most exalted thoughts of; to worship; to adore."¹⁰ As our Lord JESUS CHRIST teaches us in JOHN 5:23, "...all men should honour [GOD] The Son, even as they honour [GOD] The Father..."¹¹ For if our own imperfect earthly fathers know to give that which is good to we their children, how much more our Father Above Who alone is perfect? If we learn to honour our fathers on earth, shall we not even more learn to honor our Father GOD Above? And if we truly learn to honour our Eternal Father in Heaven, shall we not better learn to honour our fleshly fathers on earth?

⁸ 3, John Wesley's Explanatory Notes, EXODUS 20:12.

⁹ 4, Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary, "honor," verb, entry 1, page HON – HON. No page numbers.

¹⁰ 4, Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary, "honor," verb, entry 2, page HON – HON. No page numbers.

¹¹ 1, KJV, JOHN 5:23.

V. THIS AND ALL THE COMMANDMENTS ARE INCUMBENT UPON ALL MEN

Now it may be asked, “If This Commandment was given by The LORD to ancient Biblical Israel, is it binding to men even today?” Most certainly, This and The entire Ten Commandments are universal decrees of GOD which govern the lives of all men in all times and places. They are the standard by which our lives must be governed and by which nations must be judged. As Wycliffe says of the contingent clause to The Fifth Command of EXODUS 20:12 - “...that thy days may be long upon the land which The LORD thy GOD giveth thee”¹² - “This ...refers both to Israel’s sojourn in The Land of Promise, and also to the life of ...[every] individual. Not only in [ancient] Israel, but in all nations and [in] all individual lives...,” in all nations, in all times and places!¹³ For if we desire to dwell securely in GOD’s rest in both this world and the next, we must every day on this earth – with His enabling Grace – always seek and strive to keep His Commandments!

VI. MAN’S DUTY TO HONOR HIS EARTHLY FATHER

We may ask, “Why does Table Two begin with this Commandment?” Because, as the Catechism of The Catholic Church states, “The Divine Fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood; this is the foundation of the honor owned to parents.”¹⁴ He who thus loves The Father in Heaven must love his father and mother on earth. For “respect for parents... derives from gratitude toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work, have brought their children into the world and enabled them to grow in stature, wisdom and grace.”¹⁵

The Apocrypha here provides some excellent teaching literature on this subject: Let all men take note of these words in SIRACH 3:2-7 “For The Lord hath given the father honour over the children, and hath confirmed the authority of the mother over the sons. Whoso honoureth his father maketh an atonement for his sins: And he that honoureth his mother is as one that layeth up treasure. Whoso honoureth his father shall

¹² 1, KJV, EXODUS 20:12b.

¹³ 6, Wycliffe, EXODUS 20:12, page 69.

¹⁴ 7, Catholic Catechism, III. The Duties of Family Members, # 2214, page 592.

¹⁵ 7, Catholic Catechism, III. The Duties of Family Members, # 2215, page 592.

have joy of his own children; and when he maketh his prayer, he shall be heard. He that honoureth his father shall have a long life; and he that is obedient unto The Lord shall be a comfort to his mother. He that feareth Te Lord will honour his father, and will do service unto his parents, as to his masters.”¹⁶

John Wesley sees in The Fifth Commandment its keeping to our earthly fathers in this manner: First, that we hold“...an inward esteem of them, outwardly expressed upon all occasions in our ...[behaviour] towards them; fear them, ...give them reverence... The contrary to this is mocking ...them or despising them!” Second, that we show “...obedience to their lawful commands; ...come when they call you, go where they send you, do what they bid you, do not what they forbid you; and this cheerfully, and from a principle of love. Though you have said you will not, yet afterwards repent and obey!”¹⁷

Wesley continues: Third, that we show “...submission to their rebukes, instructions and corrections, not only to the good and gentle [rebuke], but also to the... [harsh rebuke]!” Fourth, that we follow the “...advice, direction and consent of parents ...[in the right handling of their] property...! Fifth, that men should be “...endeavouring in every thing to be the comfort of their parents, and to make their old age easy to them; maintaining them if they stand in need of support!”¹⁸

Now we may hopefully better appreciate the words of Saint Paul’s call to keep The Fifth Commandment in EPHESIANS 6:1-4, “Children, obey your parents in The Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is The First Commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of The Lord.”¹⁹

¹⁶ 8, KJA, SIRACH 3:2-7.

¹⁷ 3, John Wesley’s Explanatory Notes, EXODUS 20:12.

¹⁸ 3, John Wesley’s Explanatory Notes, EXODUS 20:12.

¹⁹ 1, KJV Bible, EPHESIANS 6:1-4.

VII. MAN’S DUTY TO HONOR HIS HEAVENLY FATHER

So we see how deeply connected and inseparable is the line in men of the honoring of their earthly parents with the honoring of The Almighty Himself! For reflected within the love and obedience due to a man’s earthly parents is a portion of the very structure of the created universe in which GOD has placed us to honour our parents. For as a man’s duty out of thankfulness and love is to honor and obey his earthly father for all the good that comes from him to children, is a man not so much more bound to do so before our Heavenly Father?

And here is the danger: a people that forgets to honour its parents is surely a people that forgets to honour The King of The Universe! And will The Almighty bless and protect the nation which forgets Him? What do The Holy Scriptures say? As the man of GOD said to Eli in I SAMUEL 2:30, “Wherefore The LORD GOD of Israel saith, ...them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed!”²⁰ And again in PROVERBS 14:34, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people!”²¹ And again in PSALM 9:17, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget GOD!”²²

Shall a people dare to mock GOD, and then think themselves immune from His righteous judgement? That The Saviour merely jested in vain when He declared, that when He comes again, He will judge the nations? What does our Lord JESUS CHRIST declare over those very nations who care not for their fellow man? That they therefore cared not for Him! So we read of His awful judgement over them in MATTHEW 25:41, “...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!”²³

And yet, a people that remembers to honour its parents will be far more likely to remember The Father GOD Above! If a nation is to remain under The LORD’s strong

²⁰ 1, KJV, I SAMUEL 2:30.

²¹ 1, KJV, PROVERBS 14:34.

²² 1, KJV, PSALM 9:17.

²³ 1, KJV, MATTHEW 25:41.

arm of blessing and protection, this is certainly a prerequisite! What do The Holy Scriptures say? In PSALM 34:8-9, “Taste and see that The LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. O fear The LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him!”²⁴ And again in PSALM 34:15, “The eyes of The LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry!”²⁵ And what sight did Saint John behold the Hosts of Heaven singing to CHRIST in REVELATION 15:3-4? They sang “...the song of Moses the servant of GOD... Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee...!”²⁶

VIII. THE NATION THAN HONORS NEITHER PARENTS NOR GOD

What does the society look like that forgets The Fifth Commandment? It is a people that does not honor, respect or reverence its elders. It is a time and place where the family unit instituted by GOD – husband, wife, children, grandparents – is crushed, perverted, undermined and mocked. It is a land where young thugs roam the streets and there is a policeman on every corner. It is a civilization that, coming to believe they are entitled by right to the blessings and protections of the arm of Providence, yet turns about and denies The Creator Himself Who is The One Which bestows those very blessings and protections. Indeed, as Wycliffe says, “...the destruction of the home marks the beginning of the end” of a nation!²⁷ It is a nation that rebels against This Truth, as in PSALM 33:10, “The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect!”²⁸

In such a place, men are seen as the source of all evil and perpetrators of all violence. Fathers are disparaged and deemed unnecessary, replaced by the welfare state. Husbands are looked upon as archaic and out of date, put upon the back shelves of loathing and covered with the dust of infamy and forgetting. There is forever the cry against so called “male domination,” the stripping away of the worth of men as

²⁴ 1, KJV, PSALM 34:8-9.

²⁵ 1, KJV, PSALM 34:15.

²⁶ 1, KJV REVELATION 15 :3-4.

²⁷ 6, Wycliffe, EXODUS 20:12, page 69.

²⁸ 1, KJV, PSALM 33:10.

protectors, providers and priests to their loved ones. The broken lives and battered souls of men lie stacked up like rotting cordwood in the prisons, the poorhouses and the psychiatric plantations of despair. This is a nation that rebels against This Truth, as in PSALM 33:11, “The counsel of The LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations!”²⁹

In such a place, women are seen as the source of all perversion and the playthings of all unbridled passions. Single mothers are at the mercy of the wicked, the godless system. Women become the mere breeding vessels of children for the gain of others, and the fruit of their wombs become as mere marketable materials for the twisted imaginations of heathenized technology and barbarous banking interests. The woman is thrust into roles once reserved rightfully only to men, into tasks which she can not perform, and into duties that she can not handle. And in being so thrust, she is stripped naked of her GOD given feminine virtues and duties. Women are thrown away when they no longer meet the unstable fleshly expectations and worldly fantasies of their men, denied the protection once afforded to them and their children by holy matrimony and enduring marriages. It is a nation that rebels against This Truth, as in PSALM 34:16, “The face of The LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth!”³⁰

In such a place, children are seen as the source of all inconvenience and a resource to be preyed upon for the ends of others. The secular public schools – nay, indoctrination camps of caesars who have made themselves as gods - replace the parents, the home and The Church as the tutors of the young in all things. The child protection racket and family court industry degrades children into mere assets, which must be cataloged, harvested, housed and caged according to their impious imperial whims. The reformatories and rehabs are populated by armies of unchaste, out of control, abused and unloved youth who are devoid of any righteousness or godly moral learning. It is a nation that rebels against This Truth, as in PSALM 37:28, “For The LORD loveth

²⁹ 1, KJV, PSALM 33:11.

³⁰ 1, KJV, PSALM 34:16.

judgment, and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off!”³¹

IX. IN CONCLUSION

In view of all these things, what are we to say of The Fifth Commandment? Moses records for us GOD’s Absolute Directive and attached contingent blessing in EXODUS 20:12, “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth Thee!”³² Under The Old Covenant, ancient Israel’s possession of and dwelling securely in The Promised Land was contingent upon their honouring their parents. Why? Because a people that remembers to honour their earthly fathers is likely to remember to honour our Father GOD Above. And a nation that forgets to honour GOD will also just as surely forget to honour their parents!

As for ancient Israel, so for all men in all times and places! Under The New Covenant, our continuing to dwell within GOD’s blessing and protection in this life, and indeed our dwelling in The Eternal Promised Land Above, are contingent upon loving GOD our Saviour JESUS CHRIST and keeping His Commandments! And if we love He Who saved us by His most precious Body and Blood, we will certainly not fail to love our earthly parents! But if a man calls himself Christian, and does not honour his earthly parents, it must be asked if he truly loves The Lord. For, as we have seen, he who honours GOD The Father in Heaven must honour his father on earth; and he who does not know to honor his father on earth shall not know his duty to honor His Father in Heaven! In the Name of GOD The Father, and The Son, and The Holy Ghost, AMEN!

³¹ 1, KJV, PSALM 37:28.

³² 1, KJV, EXODUS 20:12.

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