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THE FATHER'S FAITHFUL NURTURE OF SONS

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*J*ust as he begins to redefine fatherhood over against the ideas of that ancient paternalistic society, so still the fatherhood revealed in the life and death of Jesus confirms and resists, transforms and redeems all the images, conscious and unconscious, of experienced human fatherhood that we bring to it in our very different society. If the severe and authoritarian ancient image of paternity in Israel needed to be corrected in terms of the love and compassion of the one who received the prodigal; so the modern image, indulgent, non-prescriptive, often detached and unsupportive, needs to be corrected in a different direction.

THOMAS SMAIL

*M*ere optimistic love lacks, in the first place, the Biblical tension. It is an abridgment, a minimizing, and therefore a vitiating, of Biblical preaching. The era following the Enlightenment is pre-eminently the era of the humanized God.

G. C. BERKOUWER

*T*here seems to be no end to the books being written in our generation on the subject of parenting. From the scholarly tomes to the simple "how-to" handbooks, whether Christian or secular, liberal or conservative, everyone seems to have something to say on the matter of raising children. Yet, how often is it the case that one good example is better than many books. Especially when it comes to training and nurturing children, we have no better paradigm than that of the quintessential parent Himself, God the Father.

The subject of the fatherhood of God is appropriately divided into four distinct aspects: (1) Creative, (2) Trinitarian, (3) Christological and (4) Redemptive.¹ However, it is within the context of God's redemptive activity in Christ that His fatherly nature is most clearly depicted to us as His children.

Fundamental to the New Testament is the fact of the Father's begetting of His children. John is careful to emphasize this in the opening lines of his Gospel (John 1:13). Furthermore, because Jesus is God's Son, union with Him through faith results not only in a new existence through regeneration, but a new relationship to God as sons through adoption (Gal. 3:26). So central is this theme to the Father's eternal plan, that Paul depicts our adoption as sons as the very goal of God's electing grace (Eph. 1:5). So powerful is it that John states its present ethical implica-

tions in the starkest of terms, "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). So permanent is it that the age to come will forever confirm our status before the whole universe, as sons of the Father (Rom. 8:19, 23).

Just as relevant to the theme of the fatherhood of God in redemption is His relationship to His children, not merely as begetter, but as *nurturer*. How important it is to a consistent theology of the fatherhood of God, to understand that He has not sired children and simply wandered away, leaving them to raise themselves. Our heavenly Father must not be perceived as the ungodly fathers of the world, who so often ignore their little ones once they have begotten them, often abandoning them altogether. Yet, the manner and method of God's fatherly nurture of His children is not always clearly perceived, nor does this writer lay claim to giving exhaustive treatment to the subject at present. Nonetheless, we may have the confidence that the same Father of our Lord Jesus who so faithfully nurtured Him in His days on the earth, continues this same work in His children today.

The purpose of this article is to consider briefly God's fatherly nurture and development of His children in bringing them to filial maturity in Christ. Two different theological aspects of this theme will be explored, each from pertinent New Testament texts. First, we will consider God's fatherly nurture of His people on the individual and personal level (Heb. 12:4-12), and second, on a wider scale, God's nurture of His people on the redemptive and historical plane (Gal. 3:23-4:11).

INDIVIDUAL—PERSONAL: HEBREWS 12:4-12

God is a faithful Father. This fact provides the basis for the admonitions recorded in Hebrews 12. God's faithful

discipline of His children is one of the hallmarks of Christian sonship. So important is it that those lacking such training have good reason to doubt whether they are truly God's children (12:7-8). The quotation in verses 5 and 6 is taken from the LXX version of Proverbs 3:11-12 and is intended to remind the Hebrews that such discipline is not indicative of the Father's rejection. On the contrary, "the one whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son He receives."² God's discipline of His sons is grounded in a heart overflowing with tender, principled love for His children. Indeed, such love is the very well-spring of His paternal discipline. This was an essential truth for the Hebrews to grasp in the midst of their trials, lest they fail to respond in faith to the motives and the methods of the Father. Without a doubt, these things are still essential for sons to understand today.

Careful analysis of these verses provides us with a proper understanding of the nature of the Father's discipline. Far too often, this passage is misunderstood as teaching simply that God "scourges" or spansks His erring children. While correction for sin is an important facet of the Father's activity, examination of the terminology in the text yields a fuller picture.

Four relevant words or word groups referring to the Father's child-rearing activity occur in these verses. The first word-group predominates in the context and is built upon the *paid*-stem.³ The meaning associated with these words is obviously multi-faceted, but basically concerns matters of education,⁴ training and character-formation of children.⁵ The second word, *elencho* (12:5), means to reprove or correct. Third, *mastigoo* (12:6), refers to corrective chastisement by whipping or flogging. The fourth word, *gymnazo* (12:11), alludes to the rigors often associated with athletic training (used figuratively here). From this information and the manner in which these words are used in chapter

12, it is apparent that the Father's discipline of His sons has two aspects: corrective and formative.

CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE

Of course, corrective discipline is the duty of any faithful father. It was a foundational element to God's covenant promise to David and his descendants.⁶ God used it in its most severe form with some of the erring Corinthians.⁷ It is especially regarding God's corrective discipline that the writer to the Hebrews pastorally warns his readers from Proverbs 3:11-12. There are dangers for sons in how they respond to the Father's correction for sin. They are parallel to the same dangers that confront our own earthly children when we correct them.

The interpretation of providence, be it good or bad, is always tenuous business.

God has given no one an infallible explanation for the specific events of His or anyone else's life. He has, however, given us an infallible Bible that warns us that He does indeed discipline erring sons.



The first pitfall is the tendency of sons to "think lightly"⁸ of the Father's discipline (12:5b). Because God's

chastisement is for our good (12:10) and geared toward our maturation, disregard for it is always to our own hurt. Sons who continually despise God's correction stunt their Christian growth. We have all seen earthly sons who have habitually spurned their fathers' reproofs, resulting in their being tragically and irreversibly flawed in character, in mind and in spirit. These dangers are just as real for God's children when they refuse to submit to His correction. How many Christians render themselves virtually useless in the Father's household simply because they reject His discipline? In the same way, how many have significantly compromised their testimony before the world? Finally, how many have fallen under God's ultimate discipline of sickness or even death?⁹

There is need for caution at this point. The interpretation of providence, be it good or bad, is always tenuous business. God has given no one an infallible explanation for the specific events of His or anyone else's life. He has, however, given us an infallible Bible that warns us that He does indeed discipline erring sons. Such warnings should be sufficient enough for the wise to walk carefully and obediently in the light of the Father's counsel.

The second hazard is just as dangerous as the first: "nor faint when you are reproved by Him." While the tendency of the strong-willed son is to disregard his Father's discipline, the inclination of the weak-willed child is to lose courage and give up. There are several ways this trait manifests itself. Self-pity is probably the most common. Despair and unbelief are more advanced symptoms; and the greatest threat is that of apostasy itself. It is sometimes the case that disgruntled sons, disillusioned under a father's correction, have abandoned the household altogether. This was a temptation for the Hebrew Christians to whom this epistle was addressed. Their failure to understand the Father's purposes in their discipline prompted them to think harsh

thoughts of him. Likewise, how often have we erroneously concluded while under the "smarting rod" of our Father, that He no longer cared for us, or had abandoned us altogether. At such times, the Christian must cling to these words, "those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines."

FORMATIVE DISCIPLINE

There is good warrant to regard much of the discipline to which Hebrews 12:4-12 refers, as concerned with the more positive elements of training and character formation. This is evident not only in the wording of the text,¹⁰ but in the author's appeal for his readers to consider Jesus as their example of how to endure (12:2-3). Just as earthly sons stand in need of the nurture and training of a loving father (12:9-10), so do heavenly sons. Foundational to our thesis is the assumption that God the Father does not nurture His adopted sons in a qualitatively different way than He did the Son of God Himself. In other words, God's discipline of Jesus provides us with the pattern of what every son may expect within the Father's household. While our Lord was never the object of His corrective discipline, He was always the object of the Father's formative discipline. It is within the context of Jesus' development as the fully human Son of God, that a paradigm for character training in other sons may be found.¹¹

An illuminating commentary upon this theme is found in Hebrews 5:8-9. It should be observed that the dignity of Jesus' divine Sonship did not exempt Him from such processes. The concession of verse 8, "Although He was a Son," makes it clear that just the opposite was true. Of necessity, He would be brought to filial maturity through the normal avenues of human experience and development.¹² Throughout His life, the God-man continued to increase in "wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men."¹³ Likewise, He matured, both in His comprehension

of the will of His Father and in His ability to perform the same with sinless obedience. At the foundation of this process stands a proper biblical theology of God's testing of sons. In the context of the training of His thoroughly human capacities of emotion, mind and volition, Jesus the Son learned the discipline of bending His own sinless will to conform to that of His Father. Through the adversity of daily life in a fallen world coupled with the wisdom provided by Torah, the Father carefully molded and shaped the disposition of His dear Son. There His character was honed and refined in the crucible of human experience and suffering. As He grew, the Son of God and High Priest of His people obtained an ever-expanding comprehension of the Father's will and an increasing ability to execute that will with alacrity.

It is particularly at Gethsemane and Calvary that we learn vital lessons regarding the Father's discipline of us. Our heavenly Father never intended for us to live our lives in ease and comfort, void of adversity or trial.



Because He was the Second Adam, Jesus stood in need of testing and proving, both as the Son of God and the rep-

representative of the new humanity. It was nothing less than Gethsemane itself that proved to be His ultimate test of filial loyalty.¹⁴ For one brief moment of time, the dissonance of the wills between Father and Son were displayed in profound contradiction: "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me, yet not My will, but Thine be done."¹⁵ There the sum total of thirty-three years of moral preparation were focused upon that one decision. With unflinching submission, a lifetime of studied obedience provided the strength of character by which the Son skillfully and powerfully brought His own sinless will into conformity to His Father's. In so doing, He accomplished that in which the first Adam so miserably failed. It was as the tested and proven Son of God that Jesus accomplished redemption and thus could be presented to the Hebrews as their great exemplar of perseverance.

It is particularly at Gethsemane and Calvary that we learn vital lessons regarding the Father's discipline of us. Our heavenly Father never intended for us to live our lives in ease and comfort, void of adversity or trial. His purposes, in fact, are exactly the opposite. Like our Lord and Elder Brother before us, our lot is to learn obedience from the things which we suffer. The Father's design is to train *every* son in the context of the deepest woes of human experience. The comfort and affluence of our modern, western culture so often blind us to this fact. In an earlier day, Spurgeon said it well:

Now, if God saves us, it will be a trying matter. All the way to heaven, we shall only get there by the skin of our teeth. We shall not go to heaven sailing along with white wings, but we shall proceed full, often with sails rent to ribbons, with masts creaking, and the ship's pumps at work both by night and day. We shall reach the city at the shutting of the gate, but not an hour before. O believer, thy Lord will bring thee

safe to the end of thy pilgrimage; but mark, thou wilt never have one particle of strength to waste in wantonness upon the road.¹⁶

Our present calling as sons is unto suffering with endurance,¹⁷ but not because our Father is of a stern and harsh disposition. The truth is quite to the contrary. Though character training of children is fraught with many unpleasantnesses and much sorrow (12:11), such discipline is the insignia of the Father's love (12:6). It is what some have called "tough love." We must never forget that the Father has designs for His sons in the age to come that far transcend even the most horrifying of present sufferings, just as far as Jesus' glory now transcends the horror of His sufferings on the cross. Our future glory actually necessitates our present trials.¹⁸

As a faithful Father, God is preparing us for an eternity of useful service as adult members of His household. One day, we will reign with Christ the Son in the new heavens and new earth. Whatever the nature of that reigning, we can be sure that the Father is not about to give such privilege and authority to immature or disobedient sons who have not demonstrated absolute allegiance to Him. His desire is not merely that His children obey. His goal is that we do so because as proven sons we have freely embraced His will as our will. This is the holiness and righteousness to which the writer to the Hebrews refers as the goal of the Father's discipline (12:10-11). This is true, filial maturity, when in the crucible of the most intense suffering, human autonomy and divine imperative become one.

REDEMPTIVE—HISTORICAL: GALATIANS 3:23-4:11

God's fatherly nurture of His children has implications that go beyond mere personal and individual experience. This must be fully appreciated with reference to our place

in redemptive history as members of the new covenant. Our relationship to the Father under this new economy is that of mature sons in Christ, not as immature children under Moses. How God has accomplished this transition is a testimony not only to His infinite wisdom in the execution of His plan of salvation, but to His paternal expertise.

There is no more important statement of this fact than that of Galatians 3:23-4:11. The apostle's exhortations in this text are grounded, not merely upon the abrogation of the former temporary arrangement, but upon a momentous change in relationship that has transpired between God and His children (3:26; 4:6-7). The law of Moses is no longer binding, not only because Jesus has superseded it (3:22, 25-26), but because it is no longer an appropriate or sufficient expression of the will of the Father for sons who have been brought to redemptive maturity in Christ.¹⁹ Those under the law related to the Father as slaves (4:7) and immature children (4:1,3). Sons by faith in Christ relate to the Father as full-grown and mature adults.²⁰

It is in this light that the import of the relevant terms "sons," "sons of God," and "adoption as sons" (3:26; 4:5-7) must not be missed. The antithesis within the context is not between "sons of God" and "sons of the Devil," but between mature sons in Christ and immature children (*nepioi*, 4:1, 3) under the law. In other words, under the new covenant, the phrases "sons of God" and "under the law" are mutually exclusive concepts in God's scheme of redemption. While it is true on rare occasions in the Old Testament that the term "sons" is used with reference to Israel,²¹ yet it is precisely in the Pauline sense that the title *huiou theou* (sons of God) could never have been applied even to the greatest of saints who lived under Moses. In Paul's nomenclature, "sons" is not just a general synonym for the people of God. It is an appellation specifically adapted by the apostle to distinguish between mature sons

under the new covenant, and little children under the law. An accurate paraphrase of the Pauline concept of "the sons of God" would be "covenant children who have grown up."²²

The immediate relevance of this terminology to the knotty subject of the relationship of the sons of God to the law of Moses is clear. Such sons are no longer in need of a redemptive "nanny," which is essentially Paul's term for the law (3:24-25).²³ It should be carefully observed that the emphasis of verse 24 is not upon the place of the law as an educator but as a temporary guardian of minors. As such, the primary function of the "pedagogue" was to provide necessary restraint upon the wills of underage children until such time as they reached maturity and could be trusted to the responsible use of their liberty.²⁴

To place the sons of God back under any facet of the law as a covenantal arrangement is comparable to an earthly father requiring his twenty-one-year-old to be subject to his former, childhood baby-sitter.



In this sense, the wisdom of the outworking of God's plan of salvation is powerfully illustrated for us in the realm of everyday family life. God's faithful fathering of His sons in Christ under the new covenant has moved us one

giant, eschatological step closer to the full realization of our privileges and responsibilities as filial heirs to the kingdom (4:7).²⁵ Thus, the fascinating thing about this text is that the apostle describes the fruits of Christ's redemptive work, not in terms of His people's salvation from sin and death, but in terms of their release from Mosaic custody, passage into redemptive maturity and adoption by the Father as sons who have come of age (4:5).

By way of implication, this exposes the inadequacy of any theological emphasis or system that has as its focus the law of Moses. By its very nature, the pedagogical character of the law precludes its continuation as a custodial overseer of sons who have reached maturity. To place the sons of God back under any facet of the law as a covenantal arrangement is comparable to an earthly father requiring his twenty-one-year-old to be subject to his former, childhood baby-sitter.

To be sure, in no wise is this meant to denigrate the character of the pedagogue. We maintain with the apostle that "the Law is . . . holy, and righteous and good."²⁶ During the time of immaturity, the law performed its purpose flawlessly. It is just to say that the Father's chief concern has always been for the maturity of the heirs of His household (4:1, 7), not for the perpetual employment of the nanny under whose discipline some of the children formerly existed. Once the goal has been reached, the nanny is dismissed as a faithful former employee whose time of service has ended.

Of course, the hallmark of this transition from immature to adult sons is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (4:6). Of all the blessings of the new covenant, He is the crowning gift of the Father to His newly adopted children. While the fullest internalization of the mind and will of the Father belongs to the age to come, yet with the Spirit's indwelling of the hearts (i.e., minds) of God's sons now,

comes nothing less than the initial installment²⁷ of this eschatological dynamic.

This is why external laws written upon tables of stone and intended for immature children could never suffice for full-grown sons. The Father's plan in glory is that they render perfect (if not intuitive) obedience to His will. Such submission could never be effected on the basis of an externalized law that gave no power for obedience to those who possessed it. With the gift of the Spirit comes not only this principle of internalization²⁸ but the proleptic ability by which sinless perfection shall one day be accomplished.

The attending verbal confirmation of sonship, "Abba! Father!" (4:6), is also of great significance. It should be noted that personal reference to God in such intimate terms was by no means novel within the Judaism of the time of Jesus and the apostles. Dalman gives examples from both the Apocrypha as well as rabbinical literature of the first and second centuries A. D. where individual reference is made to God as "Father."²⁹ Yet the eschatological significance of the phrase "Abba! Father!" must not be underestimated. The popular notion that this is the cry of immature babes calling for their "daddy" misses entirely the continuity of the apostle's thought. "Abba, Father" is typically the entreaty of *adult* sons who now relate to their Father on the most intimate and mature of terms. This is precisely Paul's conclusion in Galatians 4:7. The presence of the Holy Spirit and the accompanying cry of intimate dependence (4:6) are indications of the most eschatologically mature relationship to God possible this side of glory.

Well did Paul express shock and dismay that some would turn back to the law of Moses (4:9). Indeed, well should we all. Nothing could be more antithetical to the Father's plan and purpose for His sons than for them to prefer childhood to adulthood. Nothing could be more detrimental to filial intimacy with the Father than prefer-

ence by the sons for the pedagogue. In Christ, the Father has nurtured His sons to an unprecedented, redemptive-historical intimacy with *Himself*, not the law. When Christians lose sight of this, or worse, fail to realize it altogether, they are not merely in danger of losing a few of the blessings and benefits offered in Christ. They are in danger of losing the privilege of sonship itself. Here is the reason for the many sober warnings and exhortations given to the Galatians and the Hebrews in their respective epistles. In this new covenant epoch, sons cannot be slaves to the law and slaves cannot be sons (Gal. 4:7).

Incredible as it may seem, by the Spirit, those who are in Christ participate in this mature sonship with a filial status and intimacy approaching that of Jesus Himself.³⁰ Such a statement warrants careful qualification.³¹ Jesus' place as *the* Son of God is absolutely incomparable.³² Yet it remains that the aforementioned status marks a monumental advance in both privilege and experience belonging exclusively to participants of the new covenant. On the redemptive-historical level, God's people now stand on the brink of the reception of their full eschatological inheritance as mature sons.³³ This is a reality to which no participant of the Mosaic economy could ever lay claim. Through God's masterful, fatherly tutelage, our superior status and privilege in Christ as adult sons stands confirmed.

Conclusion

As long as the Father is engaged in begetting children, He will likewise be about the very serious business of nurturing them to redemptive maturity. For individual sons, this means one thing: suffering. This process by which God raises His children is nothing short of excruciating. If there be any doubt about the accuracy of this statement one need only consider the Father's dealings with His own dear Son. If this be true with regard to Him who was "holy, innocent,

undefiled, separated from sinners," how much more for the reborn descendants of Adam.

Believers today stand very much in need of a sense of holy realism regarding the nature of the Christian life. God, with no less love and tenderness, has purposed to perfect us as His sons through our sufferings. This may not be a popular thought, and certainly it is not a pleasant thought, yet it is the truth. If the Father's ultimate concern had been merely for the immediate comfort and happiness of His Son Jesus, then Gethsemane today would be just a garden outside Jerusalem, and Golgatha just another hill in Palestine. God's discipline emanates from the loving heart of an all-wise Father who knows exactly how to prepare His children for adulthood. His plan is for the holiness of His sons, indeed an obedience that is absolutely consistent with the liberty of free moral beings. We are being trained in the gymnasium of this age (Heb. 12:11b) that we might show forth the holiness of our Father in the age to come. There is where we will find our greatest happiness.

Furthermore, God has demonstrated His method of rearing children in the course of redemptive history, as He has progressively brought them from immaturity under Moses to adulthood in Christ. As this means total liberty from the childhood pedagogue (Moses), it also means greater expectations and greater accountability (the new covenant). With this higher standard comes a more certain empowerment (the Holy Spirit) by which mature sons show forth the character of their Father. Finally, the Father's laws and principles have been internalized by the Spirit as they have been woven into the fabric of the character of each son. In God's scheme of redemption, all that remains is the eschatological perfecting of the heirs to the kingdom. This tension between the already and not yet—between our present suffering and our coming perfection—becomes the identifying experience of every son (Rom. 8:17). Our pres-

ent inward groaning is the very precursor of this eschatological adoption (Rom. 8:23). Likewise, such groanings Paul attributes to the whole of creation (Rom. 8:19-22) as the entire cosmos eagerly anticipates the Father's revelation of the sons whom He has so carefully and lovingly nurtured.

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Notes

1. These are essentially the classifications given the theme in Geerhardus Vos, *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1954), 141ff.
2. In the context, the verb *paradechomai* indicates far more than mere apathetic reception. It could be accurately translated here, "He scourges every son He lovingly receives." See W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 614.
3. *Paideutes*, a noun referring to a teacher of children (v. 9); *paideia*, a noun which pertains to the training and instruction of children (vv. 5,7,8,11); and *paideuo*, a verb meaning to "bring up, instruct, train, or educate" (vv. 6-7,10). Also, the latter two sometimes have reference to corrective discipline of punishment (cf. Luke 23:16, 22; 1 Cor. 11:32; Rev. 3:19).
4. Cf. Acts 22:3.
5. Cf. Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 3:16.
6. See 2 Samuel 7:12-15.
7. See 1 Corinthians 11:30.
8. The verb in the Hebrew text of Proverbs 3:11 is *ma'as*: "to reject, refuse, despise."
9. Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:30.
10. See note 3.
11. On the subject of Jesus' human development, B. B. Warfield has written some of the most thought-provoking material I have ever read. See B. B. Warfield, "The Emotional Life of Our Lord," in *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970), 91-145; and "The Human Development of Jesus," in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 2 vols., ed. John E. Meeter (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970), 1:158-66.

12. While *teleiotheis* (Heb. 5:9, "having been made perfect") has primary reference to the culmination of Jesus' high priestly work on the cross, yet the clear implication of verse 8 is that a whole lifetime of growth and maturation through suffering was the necessary means by which He was prepared for this ultimate test of obedience to the Father.
13. Luke 2:52.
14. Marshall observes, "Jesus, facing the temptation to avoid the path of suffering appointed by God, nevertheless accepts the will of God despite His own desire that it might be otherwise. He does not seek to disobey the will of God, but longs that God's will might be different. But even this is to be regarded as temptation, and it is overcome by Jesus." See I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1992), 831.
15. Luke 22:42.
16. C. H. Spurgeon, "The Inexhaustible Barrel," in *The New Park Street Pulpit*, 6 vols. (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), 6:37.
17. See 1 Peter 2:20-21.
18. This is precisely the meaning of the *hina* (purpose) clause of Romans 8:17; "if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him." Without the sufferings of this age, there can be no glorification in the next.
19. The strictly temporary nature of the law is a major theme throughout the larger context (cf. 3:19, 23, 24; 4:2-4, 7). On the temporal nature of the phrase in verse 24, *eis Christon* ("until [the time of] Christ"), cf. Philippians 1:10; 2 Timothy 1:12; see W. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 228.
20. This transition is also at the heart of Paul's language in Romans 8:14-17.
21. E.g., Exodus 4:22-23; Deuteronomy 14:1.
22. A very edifying expansion of this idea may be found in John Brown, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Reprint; Evansville, Indiana: The Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1957), 170-202.
23. The rendering of *paidagogos* by some translations ("schoolmaster" in the KJV and "tutor" in the NKJV and ASV) is unfortunate. Had Paul meant to refer to the law as a teacher, other words would have expressed the thought more unambiguously (e.g., *didaskalos* or *paideutes*). As it stands, the reference (*paidagogos*) is to the law, not as a tutor or schoolmaster but as a custodial overseer of underage children (cf. Gal. 3:23; 4:2). This indeed is both the historical and lexical meaning of the term. See D. Furst, *paideuo* (*paidagogos*), in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 4 vols., ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1986), 3:779; and W. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 603.
24. See F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians, New International Greek Testa-*

- ment Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1992), 182-83. A paraphrase of verses 24-26 might read as follows: "When we were children, our Father gave us the law of Moses to function as our legal guardian until the time of maturity in Christ should come, to the great end that we might be justified by faith. And now that this time has arrived and we are grown-up sons, we no longer need our former child-guardian who has served his purpose well. For now both Jews and Gentiles have reached redemptive maturity through faith in Christ Jesus."
25. For further development of the relationship between the fatherhood of God and the Christian's inheritance of the eschatological kingdom, see George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1993), 82-85.
 26. Romans 7:12.
 27. See Ephesians 1:13-14.
 28. "This is the covenant that I will make with them . . . I will put my laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them" (Heb. 10:16).
 29. See Gustaf Dalman, "The Father in Heaven," in *The Words of Jesus* (Reprint; Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock & Klock, 1981), 184-89. However, Dalman goes too far when he states that use of the term "Father" was a matter of "popular usage" within the Judaism of Jesus' time; *ibid.*, 188.
 30. See Mark 14:36.
 31. Marshall points out that no saying of Jesus' has been preserved in which He links His disciples with Himself in a mutual confession of "our Father." He concludes that this silence should be interpreted as a deliberate distinction made by our Lord between His unique status before the Father, and that of His disciples. See I. Howard Marshall, "The Divine Sonship of Jesus," in *Jesus the Saviour* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1990), 136.
 32. Dalman gives helpful clarification to the distinction: "[T]he heir to the throne after coming into possession, may well enough entrust to others the authority of government . . . but they do not thereby become what He is. Their dignity remains ever dependent upon His." See Gustaf Dalman, "The Son of God," in *The Words of Jesus* (Reprint; Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock & Klock, 1981), 282.
 33. This in turn involves the tension between the already-not yet as it relates to the consummation of our filial privileges within the age to come (cf. Rom. 8:10-25 and 1 John 3:1-2).