

Back To School: 1553 Style?

by Wayne Goff

The Rules of Conduct are an excerpt from Philip Schaff's History of the Christian Church, volume 8, "The Swiss Reformation," pages 211-212.

Heinrich Bullinger

Heinrich Bullinger lived in Switzerland from 1504-1575 and was a leader in the Zwinglian Reformation Movement which attempted to correct(?) Catholic error and promote what he considered to be true Christianity, but which was actually a less rigid form of Calvinism (209). He was a pupil of Ulrich Zwingli. His son, Henry, went to Germany to further his theological studies, and was given the following rules of conduct to observe. I thought it interesting and wonder if Christian parents today send anything similar to that with their children when they go off to college! My guess is that they do not.

Wise Rules Of Conduct

1. Fear God at all times, and remember that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom
2. Humble yourself before God, and pray to him alone through Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate
3. Believe firmly that God has done all for our salvation, through his Son
4. Pray above all things for strong faith active in love
5. Pray that God may protect your good name and keep thee from sin, sickness, and bad company
6. Pray for the fatherland, for your dear parents, benefactors, friends, and all men, for the spread of the Word of God; conclude always with the Lord's Prayer...
7. Be reticent, be always more willing to hear than to speak, and do not meddle with things, which you do not understand
8. Study diligently Hebrew and Greek as well as Latin, history, philosophy, and the sciences, but especially the New Testament, and read daily three chapters in the Bible, beginning with Genesis.
9. Keep your body clean and unspotted, be neat in your dress, and avoid above all things intemperance in eating and drinking
10. Let your conversation be decent, cheerful, moderate, and free from all uncharitableness

Biblical Advice?

So go over the ten rules and see if you can find a biblical basis for them. Here is what I have discovered:

1. Very similar to Proverbs 1:7 where Solomon wrote that "*the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...*"
2. Very similar to 1 Peter 5:6 and 1 Timothy 2:5.
3. Assuming this rule is based upon Calvinistic theology, I must kindly disagree. God has done everything for man which man cannot do for himself ("*Grace,*" Eph. 2:8), but not **absolutely** all, for God *requires* man to do for himself what he **can** do ("*Faith,*" Eph. 2:8). The Calvinist affirms that God chooses the "elect" and **gives** him faith! The Bible teaches that **free will** let's man choose to believe or not.
4. One may pray for help and wisdom, and choose to have strong faith active in love, James 2:14-26.
5. Similar to James 1:27, 1 John 3:22; 5:21; Jude 24.
6. Similar to 1 Timothy 2:1-4. Wise advice.
7. A good commentary on James 1:19, "*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*"
8. Wow! Does anyone study Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and the New Testament in school today? I doubt many "seminary" students do this! See Ecclesiastes 9:10
9. Similar to James 1:27; Philippians 4:5, KJV
10. See Colossians 4:6; Titus 2:8

So what advice have you for your children today?

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