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“YE HEART OF A FATHER”: MALE PARENTING IN COLONIAL NEW ENGLAND

Lisa Wilson

Loving fathers in colonial New England spoke in a “different voice.” They combined affection and power in the context of mutual familial obligation to raise their children to adulthood. What changed from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries was often expression rather than feeling. Men loved their children in both centuries, but the familiar language of sentiment emerged primarily at the end of the colonial period. Although these men parented in ways that we would judge harsh, they would find us equally repugnant in our permissiveness and disregard of religious training.

Little doe children think, wt affection is in ye Heart of a Father.

—Increase Mather, Diary, April 7, 1675

Puritan patriarchs, according to many scholars, threatened their children with a delayed inheritance, divine retribution, and the rod.¹ From the late twentieth-century perspective, such religiously based child rearing often seems antiquated at best and abusive at worst.² To understand how such fathers could see themselves not as cruel but as loving requires a fresh look at familiar sources.³ The men examined here were the educated, the monied, and often the churched of colonial New England.⁴ How did these familiar historical figures, those most often criticized for misguided parenting, interpret their own behavior?

Fathering, from their perspective, grew from a core concern over the fate of their children—body and soul.⁵ They allayed their anxieties with scrupulous attention to the upbringing of their offspring. A careful monitoring of their children’s growth, education, and religious training marked their love. These fathers, to borrow a classic phrase from feminist theory, expressed their affection using “a different voice.”⁶

Scholars have argued that families in northwestern Europe and in the British North American colonies, at least before the late eighteenth century, were more pragmatic

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than sentimental.⁷ Refinement and revision of this view has been ongoing. I, like others, have found affectionate families in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁸ The New England men examined here, however, suggest something more; affection could also motivate pragmatic and even authoritarian fathering. The focus here is on self-perception. If asked to judge us, these forefathers would likely find our own parenting repugnant in its overindulgence, permissiveness, and godlessness.

Fathers asserted their authority in early New England within a context of mutual obligation and love. Cotton Mather, son of Increase, advised fathers to establish "sweet authority" over their children.⁹ A father led his children to adulthood using affection as well as power. Men did have economic and political power, but in the home this power was always tempered by affection and mutual dependence. Paternal power was shared, checked, and occasionally rejected.

Clerical advice went out to both parents, not just fathers.¹⁰ At the same time, however, the notion of the family "head" made fathering seem a distinct endeavor. For example, Jonathan Edwards, at the start of the ferment of the Great Awakening in Northampton, lectured his flock about the need to monitor their children's behavior on the Sabbath. He "urged parents to agree among themselves to govern their families." The next day, he proposed a neighborhood meeting of "the heads of families . . . that they might know each other's minds & agree every one to restrain his own family." As it turned out, the children changed their behavior without encouragement so "the parents found little or no occasion for the exercise of government in this case."¹¹ This kind of contradictory usage demonstrates the difficulty of determining what fell to parents and what devolved on fathers alone.

Certainly, children felt both parents contributed to their upbringing. Benjamin Trumbull wrote his "Honoured Parents" from Yale in 1765, "if any youth has cause of Gratitude towards his parents surely I." Both father and mother provided "wise and Seasonable Counsels," and had "withholden nothing in your power to bestow that might Serve for my Advantage." This "Tender Care and inspection" continued "from my Infancy even untill now."¹² Samuel Chandler, at Harvard in the 1770s, likewise revealed over his good fortune to have

been brought up & instructed by indulgent Parents . . . who have taken us from our Infancy Cloathed us gave us Food for the nurishing of our Bodys protected us from all Evils & instructed us in every Branch of Learning which they themselves were capable of have spaired no Cost for our Education nor through any Pains two great to be taken that was for our Advantage.¹³

For Chandler, providing, protecting, and educating involved both parents.

In addition, parenting implied obligation for both the parent and the child. In *A Family Well-Ordered*, Cotton Mather listed parents' responsibilities to their children but also "The Duties of Children To their Parents."¹⁴ When his father, Increase, published a sermon titled "The Duty of Parents to pray for their Children," Cotton attached his own sermon, "The Duty of Children whose Parents have pray'd for them."¹⁵ This kind of reciprocity had its roots in 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."¹⁶ As Cotton Mather assured his young parishioners, "*Children*, If you break the *Fifth* Commandment there is not much Likelihood, that you will keep the rest."¹⁷

The image of God as the father of all believers presented a divine example of fatherhood in colonial New England. God disciplined his children with love.¹⁸ “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”¹⁹ John Davenport, a Puritan divine, discussed the meaning of this passage with a bereaved widow in 1635; “As a father correcteth the child which he loveth; so doeth the Lord every sonne that he receiveth.”²⁰ G. Selleck Silliman of Fairfield, Connecticut, found the ideas of correction and submission equally compelling in the late eighteenth century after his return from British capture in 1780. He rejoiced at his release and thanked “a most gracious God, who, tho he has corrected, has not destroyed, but hath corrected us as a tender Father does the Children whom he loveth.”²¹ Increase Mather and others also spoke of God’s loving embrace. “Lord take vs into yi arms e keep vs by yi power through Faith vnto salvation. Wee cast or selvs into yi Armes, O or Father. If children cast yms. into ye Armes of yir Father, will not Hee take ym into his Armes.”²² The Lord was also “A father to the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, *is* God in his holy habitation.”²³ Michael Wigglesworth, hearing of his father’s death while at Harvard in the 1650s, prayed that the Lord would “become a father to the fatherless” and care for his siblings.²⁴ Cotton Mather feared death in part because of his concern for his children. Through prayer, he was “perswaded and satisfied, that God will bee a *Father* to my *fatherless* Offspring.”²⁵ This concept had resonance beyond the clerical ranks. After a dispute with a neighbor over a hoe, Thomas Johnson found himself in a Salem, Massachusetts, court accused of “breach of peace.” During the confrontation, Johnson had called his widowed neighbor “a preting oald foole.” She responded righteously that “a curs pronounc against him for Ronging of ye widdow and ye fatherles and that god would plead tharr caus.”²⁶ Even at the end of the eighteenth century, well-wishers still comforted “mourning Children” with the consolation that they had “God for their Father.”²⁷

Rev. John Williams found himself separated from his children by the Caughnawaga, or Macquas (Mohawks), as he styled them, when they descended on Deerfield, Massachusetts, in February 1703/04.²⁸ The natives killed two of his children immediately. The rest of his family commenced the long march to Montreal. He began the journey with five of his children, ranging in age from four to fifteen. Ultimately, the family was separated. Faced with the inability to watch over his own, Williams looked to God to care for his fatherless children. “That though my children had no father to take care of them, that word quieted me to a patient waiting to see the end the Lord would make, Jer. 49:11 ‘Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive.’ ” His prayers were answered: “God carried them wonderfully through great difficulties and dangers.”²⁹

Men were to follow the example of their maker as they parented their own offspring. Cotton Mather, in *A Family Well-Ordered* (1699), and Benjamin Wadsworth, in *The Well-Ordered Family* (1712), outlined the parental responsibilities of godly parents. Fathers, like their heavenly model, needed to show both firmness and love. Mather insisted that “Our *Authority* should be so Tempered with kindness, and Meekness, and Loving Tenderness, that our Children may *Fear* us with *Delight*, and see that we *Love* them, with as much *Delight*.” Correction with love instilled reverence, not fear.

Let not your *Authority* be strained with such *Harshness*, and *Fierceness*, as may discourage your *Children*. To treat our *Children* like *Slaves*, and with such *Rigour*, that

they shall always *Tremble* and *Abhor* to come into our presence, *This* will be very unlike to our *Heavenly Father*.³⁰

Wadsworth likewise asserted, "Parents should nourish in them selves, a very tender love and affection to their Children."³¹ This love became manifest in the careful education of all children. A father should teach his children good manners and basic skills to make them "Useful in their place" or "*well settled in the world*."³² Finally, and most important according to Mather, "*Instruct your Children, in the Articles of Religion*."³³ A father should teach his children their catechism but also expose them to sermons. In religion and in all things "*Besure to set good Examples before your children*."³⁴ A good father, like the Lord, provided love, guidance, and a model of ideal behavior.

Fathers in colonial New England had a pattern of proper behavior gleaned from the Bible and reinforced from the pulpit. Like the Lord, a father had to be both harsh and gentle with his children. These seemingly contradictory imperatives fit comfortably together in colonial New England. A father guided his children with a loving but firm hand.

With godly imperatives in mind, fathering officially began with naming and baptizing a child. Baptism was both a formal ceremony welcoming a new child and a naming ritual.³⁵ Some, like Cotton Mather, had misgivings about this mix of religious and secular purpose. "Oh, Let it not be done, as an Empty *Formality*; as if the *Baptism* of your Children, were for nothing, but only a *Formal* and a *Pompous* putting of a Name upon them."³⁶ Still, whether for godliness or display, the father had a key role to play.³⁷ Often, he held the baby as the minister sprinkled water on the newborn's head. Samuel Sewall, a wealthy Boston merchant, meticulously noted his children's demeanor during this ceremony. When he baptized his son Henry in 1685, he noted, "the Child was fine and quiet." Stephen, born in 1687/88, "shrunk at the water but cry'd not." Daughter Judith was particularly stoic when in 1690 "She cried not at all, though a pretty deal of water was poured on her by Mr. Willard when He baptized her."³⁸ He took pride in his offspring. Their behavior already reflected on his parenting ability. In this public place, a man gave his child to God but also publicly announced his fatherhood.

The open announcement of a child's name fell to fathers, but the decision itself was often a more complex affair.³⁹ Thomas Shepard, safely settled in his pulpit in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1635, named his son Thomas after a private exchange with his wife. "2d son Thomas; which name I gaue him; because, we thought the Lord gaue me the first Son I lost on sea, in this agayne, & hence gaue him his brothers name."⁴⁰ Both husband and wife clearly discussed their sadness over their earlier loss and an appropriate name for their new child.⁴¹ James Cogswell announced the birth of his daughter in 1777 to his father from his ministerial post in Canterbury, Connecticut, saying, "My Wife proposes to call the Child after my Mother and Sister."⁴² G. Selleck Silliman likewise left the decision of a name to his wife. "I had got an Opinion some how or other that *Polly* would be a pretty Name for it, but these last Letters have made that altogether improper [the child was a boy], and I am altogether at a loss what to say about it." In fact, his involvement was solicited by both his wife and his older son once it was clear that Mary Silliman was "at a Loss."⁴³ A name was decided on in consultation with others.

Men honored relatives with namesakes.⁴⁴ Samuel Sewall named his daughter Judith "for the sake of her Grandmother and great Grandmother, who both wore that Name."⁴⁵ Cotton Mather named his son Increase in 1699, "in Honour to my Parent."⁴⁶ This prac-

tice was so common that Sewall felt the need to explain that he had named his son Joseph in 1688 for the biblical Joseph in Ezekiel “and not out of respect to any Relation, or other person.”⁴⁷ Sometimes a child’s name honored a dead sibling.⁴⁸ John Ballantine, from his pulpit in Westfield, Massachusetts, in 1762 noted the baptism of his young son, “called his name Winthrop. My 5th child was called Winthrop and was suddenly taken away from us.” He had also named a daughter, Lydia, after her dead sister. “We first lost a Lydia then a Winthrop The repairer of breaches granted us first a Lydia then a Winthrop.”⁴⁹ William Cooper, town clerk of Boston, also in the 1760s named his son John, “called after a fine Child of ours which lived but a short space of Time.”⁵⁰

Often, a relative so honored had characteristics a father wanted the child to possess.⁵¹ Cotton Mather named his daughter Jerusha in 1711 “to admonish her, if she lives, that she should walk in the Steps of Piety, which were taken by my deceased Sister of that Name.”⁵² Likewise, biblical names carried a hope for an infant’s future disposition.⁵³ Mather named his young daughter Hannah in 1696/97 “that shee may bee a *gracious* Child, and imitate those of her Name, which are commemorated in the Oracles of God.”⁵⁴

More often than not, a man wanted both to honor and instruct. Sewall toiled over the naming of his daughter Sarah in 1694. “I was struggling whether to call her Sarah or Mehetabel; but when I saw Sarah’s standing in the Scripture, viz: Peter, Galatians, Hebrews, Romans, I resolv’d on that side. Also Mother Sewall had a sister Sarah; and none of my sisters of that name.”⁵⁵ Cotton Mather outlined his decision-making process when he named his newborn twins in 1713.

My Wife’s vertuous Mother having worn the Name of *Martha*, the Relatives were fond of having the Daughter called so; which name also signifying, *Doctrix*; may the better suit (as my Father said) a *Doctor’s* Daughter. I then thought, who was *Martha’s* Brother; and that *Eleazar* was the same with *Lazarus*; and a priestly Name; and the Child must be led to look for the *Help of God*, which is in the Signification of the Name. I had also an excellent Uncle of that Name. So I called them, ELEAZAR and MARTHA.⁵⁶

Sadly, both children died shortly after their baptisms. Fathers took the opportunity that naming a child presented to begin to instruct their children and try to shape their characters.

The child’s development and growth absorbed the attention of both parents. Like the nursing fathers of the Bible,⁵⁷ even breast-feeding deserved a father’s involvement.⁵⁸ Men describe their wives’ pains as their milk came in. Rev. Peter Thatcher of Milton, Massachusetts, recorded in 1680, “my dear was but Ill & toward night was in much paine milk came into her breasts.”⁵⁹ Ebenezer Parkman, farmer and minister in Westborough, Massachusetts, fretted in 1738, “My wife in great Pain . . . thought to be the Coming of her milk.”⁶⁰ Even once the milk was established, a woman could struggle with breast-feeding. Parkman’s wife was “distressed wth. her Nipples.—She got up, but she grows weaker by Reason of ye Childs suckg her wh her Nipples are so Sore.”⁶¹ Samuel Sewall watched his wife struggle to nurse their son in 1677. The nurse and other women that watched the new mother “first laboured to cause the child suck his mother, which he scarce did at all. In the afternoon my Wife set up, and he sucked the right Breast bravely, that had the best nipple.”⁶² If a wife’s breast continued to be sore, it threatened both mother and child. In Peter Thatcher’s household, a “plaster of

bees was [wax] & butter & Nutmeg” was applied to his wife’s breasts in 1680 as he sat and read to her.⁶³ The final solution was to lance an infected breast. James Cogswell described this procedure to his father in 1777. “It was opened, and discharged near a quart of purelant matter, it is now much easier than before it was opened, and seems to be in a good way.”⁶⁴ Until breast-feeding was established, a wife and child were not out of danger.

Men recorded the progress of their children’s weaning. Peter Thatcher noted in his journal in 1679, “we began to wean ye Child.”⁶⁵ Ebenezer Parkman recorded in his diary in 1744, “last night we began to Wean Sarah.”⁶⁶ When “Nurse Randal” was “taken with an Ague in her Brest,” Samuel Sewall lamented that his daughter Judith had to be weaned “though it be a few days before we intended.”⁶⁷ Ebenezer Parkman found himself in a similar situation in 1726 when his wife’s illness “put us upon Weaning the Child which this Night began.”⁶⁸ For the widower Eliphalet Pearson, the first principal of Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, weaning his child from her wet nurse in 1783 was his decision alone. “I have some tho’ts of weaning Marie before the vacation,” he wrote his sister. He requested her wisdom on the subject. “Should you think of any objection to weaning the child . . . would thank you to inform me.”⁶⁹ Fathers also carefully recorded the process itself. John Hull, mint-master and political leader in Boston, noted in 1659 that his daughter Hannah was “weaned without any trouble; only, about fifteen days after, she did not eat her meat well.”⁷⁰ Rev. Mather Byles, as pre-Revolutionary fervor shook the town of New London, assured his sister that his son Walter resented his weaning “as an Infringement upon Liberty, Property, & the Rights of *Magna Charta*.”⁷¹

Fathers also carefully monitored their children’s physical development. Mather Byles wrote to his father in 1763 about his “little *Becca*.” He assured her grandfather that “She grows finely.”⁷² Eliphalet Pearson likewise informed a relative in 1782, “My dear babe is well, & grows finely—the day she was three months old, she weighed 15 lb.”⁷³ Six months later, Pearson informed his sister that “my dear babe is a little indisposed by cutting teeth, one is thro’ & another is soon expected.”⁷⁴ Ezra Stiles, a minister and future president of Yale, marked the tenth birthday of his daughter Polly in 1767 with the careful measurement of each of his children after a family breakfast.

Betsey	— 5 feet	1/4 Inc	Isaac	— 4 feet	11 1/3
Ezra	— 5 —	9	Ruth	— 4	10 1/4
Kezia T.	— 5 —	1 1/2	Polly	— 4	1
Emilia	— 5 —	1 3/4 ⁷⁵			

Regular growth and normal maturation reassured an anxious parent that his children had a hopeful future.

Similarly, fathers observed their children’s play for evidence of proper mental development. Selleck Silliman informed his in-laws in 1778 that their grandson Selleck “grows fast in Mind as Body.”

Our Dear little Selleck has got a Go:Cart (as they are called) in which he runs about the House out of one Room into another like a Spirit; and where I made the Pause [in his letter] he came runing out of the Kitchen to his Mamma; & lookeing and seeing Papa writing at the Desk, nothing would do but that he must have his little high Great Chair (in which he commonly sits up at Table & Breakfasts with us, with as much Decency

as most People do) and sit up at the Desk with Papa, and have some Papers to play with.⁷⁶

Silliman particularly took pride in his son's imitation of adult behavior. The elder Selleck relished his son Benny's combativeness on his own return from military service. "In the Morning before it was light little Benny awaked,—heard a Man's Voice talking with his Mamma, he raised himself on one Elbow, and spatted one Hand full in my Face, and cried & quarrelled with me & fought." Finally, he recognized his father and calmed down. This episode pleased his father tremendously. "Ask Selleck who is Papa's Baby—Benny says he is Papa's Baby,—I is Papa's Man."⁷⁷ His young son playfully practiced his adult role.

A father's interest went beyond childhood accomplishments; fathers also simply took pleasure in their young children's company. Oliver Ellsworth, a young lawyer from Windsor, Connecticut, although absorbed in his country's business and far from his infant son in 1781, received regular reports from home on his progress. He missed his family but particularly its new addition. "I want much to see the little blue eyed fellow, & would have you give him one good hearth smack for me." He consoled his weary wife saying, "laughing & playing" of children "makes you some pay for tending."⁷⁸ On a family journey in 1778 from Stonington to Fairfield, Connecticut, Selleck and Mary Silliman were highly entertained by their young son's playfulness. "Our little Pratter contributed mightily to smoth the Way. He was through the whole of it constantly amusing us with his little innocent Prattle and Merriment." Once home "he gets busy at Play, often entertains us with singing Dol De Dol &c &c."⁷⁹ Mather Byles conversed with his infant daughter as he wrote to her grandfather in 1763. She "sends her Duty to her GrandPappa & thanks him for her gold Buttons: at least, when I asked her just now about the Matter, she did not deny it."⁸⁰ Selleck Silliman "had a long Chatt" with his son in 1777 "and if he had not began to grow hungry, I believe he would have kept me to a later Hour."⁸¹ Such fathers reveled in their young offspring. They enjoyed their company for its own sake.

Once beyond infancy, a child needed careful guidance to assure proper character development. At this point, a father began to parent in a way that distinguished him from his wife. Of course, women trained their daughters for their adult roles and fathers focused on their sons, but their parental techniques also diverged. Men concentrated their energies on teaching their children the secular and religious truths that would direct them toward adulthood. Such caretaking demonstrated their affection. They provided their children with the tools for a productive adulthood and for eternal life.

A father's instruction began with the proper rules of behavior. To some extent, they were the same for boys as for girls. Benjamin Trumbull wrote to his six-year-old son from Harlem, New York, during the Revolution. He carefully outlined his parental expectations in easy-to-read block letters. "My Son, love God, learn to pray to him, to read his Word, and keep all his Commandments. Play not on the Sabbath, obey your Mama; help her all you can every day; Speak no ill Word, and always speak the Truth." Steal "not even a pin." Difficult indeed was his father's injunction to "love your sisters and do them good always." He was to be equally "kind and loving" to his "mates" and "treat everybody with kindness and good manners." The reward for such a good boy—"every One will love you."⁸²

Josiah Cotton of Plymouth, Massachusetts, politician and missionary to the Indians, made a careful list of "rules" for his children's "observation" in 1723/24. First on his list was the need for them to pray "as soon as they awake in the morning, & going to bed at night." They should likewise acknowledge their earthly "Superiours" by a "bow or Curtesy." To squelch childish chatter, they were "Not to speak when others are Speaking, not talk too much or all at once, nor speak before they think." Equally inappropriate was the tendency among the young "to behave themselves awkwardly or untowardly by Gaping, Staring, &c." Hovering around the adults would not do. They were "Not to repeat what others say, or stand listening when they have other business to mind." Among themselves, they were "Not to Contend or fight with one another." They must "keep themselves neat & Clean, & to be so in everything." To minimize chaos, they were "Not to seat themselves first at the Table nor to stand between others & the fire, or put things out of their places." They must carry out their responsibilities to the household, "Not to stay to long when sent of an Errand or desert the business & Duty required of them." "Proper Titles & terms to men & Women" were to be used at all times. Finally, children should "behave themselves decently in all other parts of divine Worship & at all other times &c."⁸³

Once good behavior became well established, a child needed more formal instruction. A caring father took interest in the education of both his male and female children. William Samuel Johnson, a Stratford, Connecticut, lawyer and politician, advised his young daughter Nancy in 1769, "Apply yourself, my dear Child, with the utmost earnestness & assiduity, to make the best use of every advantage you enjoy. Early youth is the season in which to lay those excellent foundations of Virtue & Industry."⁸⁴ He hoped she would become a "wise & good" woman.⁸⁵ General Samuel McClellan of Worcester, Massachusetts, and Woodstock, Connecticut, similarly warned his son in 1782, "Study now is your time & hope you Will improve all the opportunity as it will Be Ever to your advantage."⁸⁶ A father wanted all his children to prepare for adulthood with care. Education was, nonetheless, gender appropriate. Josiah Cotton in 1723/24 expected civil behavior from both his sons and daughters, but educational goals were gender specific.

My Sons (provided they are not Educated at the Colledge [Harvard]), may, when they are about Fourteen or Sixteen years old, spend about a Twelve Month at Boston to Study the Mathematicks, & any thing that may be usefull; And that my Daughters also spend some time there, not to render them prouder, but to better their behaviour, & by going to School to acquaint themselves with such knowledge, as there are not advantages for in the Country.⁸⁷

Timothy Edwards, father of Jonathan Edwards, in 1711 fretted over his son's education in his absence. "I desire to take care yt Jonathan dont Loose wt he hath Learned." For Jonathan, this included careful attention to his Latin. Edwards also wanted "ye Girls keep what they have Learnt." Latin was not part of their regimen.⁸⁸

Instruction was both secular and religious. To some extent, the two were inseparable. William Samuel Johnson, in 1770, after a drubbing from his wife over his constant work-related absences, assured her that his family commitments came first. "I know how much Children need a father, & I *feel* how much I wish to be in every sense a Father to mine. No Man can feel it more, but I must do only what I can & as well as I can." With the next line, he demonstrated his concern. "There is nothing I am so Solici-

tous about as that they should be Educated in Principles of Religion Virtue & Industry.” He outlined his hopes for his children in detail. “My first Prayer for them is that they may be made wise unto eternal Salvation & have their Souls Sanctified thro the blood & sufferings of our adorable Redeemer.” Only after such education should the children turn their attention to their more worldly callings. “The Son’s be so Educated that by Gods blessing upon their Industry they may in some lawful Profession get a decent Support in life.” His daughters should receive instruction so “that they may make Virtuous amiable & useful wives.” For Johnson, nothing mattered so much as a father’s obligation to educate his children. For him it was “the most importt. Object we have to attend to in this world.”⁸⁹

Sheriff Ezekiel Williams of Wethersfield, Connecticut, in 1779 offered the same judgment to his son, John. “Above all things a Religious Education is the most important.” He urged him to study the Bible, “in that we are Taught the way of Life & Salvation by Jesus Christ, without the Knowledge of Which, all other Learning is but of little Consequences.”⁹⁰ Williams spoke the same words to his son as his father had spoken to him. On his deathbed in 1776, Rev. Solomon Williams of Lebanon, Connecticut, had told his children, “We must make Religion our Business, our Choice, our Delight, at all times, any thing Short of that would be nothing.”⁹¹

A father ideally conducted family prayer and offered daily religious instruction. Some, like Cotton Mather, succeeded in making their homes “a School of Piety.”⁹² Most men, however, were hard pressed to keep up the regimen. The pressure of other concerns overcame the imperative for daily spiritual lessons. As early as 1639, farmers in Plymouth had difficulty fulfilling their family duties. John Reyner and William Brewster wrote to John Cotton for advice concerning this growing problem. Some farms, as the settlement grew, were “distant from the place of a mans habitacon and of the churches assembling three or foure miles or thereabouts.” Such distances meant “a mans famylie is Divided so that in busie tymes they cannot (except upon the Lords day) all of them joyne wth him in famylie duties.”⁹³ Elisha Niles, a schoolteacher and farmer in Colchester, Connecticut, admitted after the death of his second child in 1786, “I had Never kept up family Prayer although I was fully Persuaded it was my Duty, Owing in most part to my living in a family with a Number of Children which with some other reasons I thought it not Expedient.”⁹⁴ Some fathers felt family devotions were unnecessary. Describing a Baptist minister in Rhode Island, Ezra Stiles marveled in 1770, “He appears to be a solid substantial Man, yet don’t believe that Christians are obliged to Family Worship; & seldom practises it; & that only on Lordsday morning, & this not every Ldsday; never pforms it on Sabbath Evening, nor any other day of the Week.”⁹⁵ Pressed by business, numerous children, or lack of faith many men failed to live up to Cotton Mather’s ideal.

Benjamin Trumbull outlined the duties of a young Christian to his namesake in 1775. “My Son, love God, learn to pray to him, to read his Word, and keep all his Commandments. Play not on the Sabbath.” His cooperation would not only please his parents, but “These things the great God commands you to do; if you will do them he will have you for his Child.”⁹⁶ Proper behavior, prayer, and study marked a young person’s path to salvation. Once a child could read well and tolerate longer hours of study, a devout father could take the task of religious instruction quite seriously. Cotton Mather was such a father. His regimen for religious indoctrination was exhausting. He made long lists of his goals and methods. First, he prayed for each child before commencing any instruction. At the table, he would tell them “delightful Stories, especially *scrip-*

tual ones.” Whenever he crossed the path of a child during the course of the day he “lett fall some *Sentence* or other, that may be monitory and profitable to them.” He taught them to practice “*secret Prayer*” and set them to the task. He stressed the need for his children “to return good Offices for evil Ones” and be kind to one another. Mather also encouraged them to write “*excellent Things*” as soon as they were able. When they were old enough, he reinforced these lessons with private instruction and prayer in his study.⁹⁷ The family read various texts as well as the Bible. Each child should have a private place to “read, and write, and pray.” They could write prayers and other things of value. What would be of “unspeakable Advantage,” however, would be the careful contemplation by each child of the question “*what should I wish to have done if I were now adying!*”⁹⁸ Josiah Cotton made a list of Bible references for his children to refer to in time of trouble. He noted, “I hope my Children will search the places refered to &c, & lay up the divine precepts in their hearts, that they may not offend their Maker & Confound themselves.”⁹⁹

Secular and religious education formed the core of a father’s display of affectionate regard for his offspring. Even if a father failed to express his inner feelings openly in words, he did so through such nurturing concern. Sitting down to a fine meal and surrounded by his children, one pious father remarked, “it would be a much more pleasing thing to See them all in Heaven.”¹⁰⁰ Through religious instruction, a man demonstrated his deep love for his offspring. His efforts could provide them with a support that would not fail and, with God’s blessing, eternal life.¹⁰¹ Benjamin Trumbull, in 1775, gave his six-year-old son religious guidance with a full heart. “Dada sends you this Letter to teach you how to live, and to show you how he loves you.”¹⁰² What greater gift could a father give a child? Cotton Mather in 1711/12 described his religious teachings as “precious and pleasant Riches” deposited in the “Chambers” of his children’s “Souls.”¹⁰³

As a captive in 1705/06, separated from his children, John Williams could only care for his children through prayer. He feared his children would die, or worse, be converted to Catholicism. The natives’ allies, the Jesuits, often manipulated the religious sensibilities of their captives. Williams’s son Samuel succumbed to this pressure. When Samuel took on the “Romish” faith, he shattered his father who felt powerless to protect his child’s soul. “I mourn over you day and night!” He pleaded with his son, “God knows that the catechism in which I instructed you is according to the word of God and so will be found in the Day of Judgment.” He urged him to return to his Bible and secret prayer. “Accept of my love and don’t forsake a father’s advice, who, above all things, desires that your soul may be saved in the day of the Lord.”¹⁰⁴ Eventually, his son’s soul was redeemed.

Love is easier to recognize in the affectionate language of the late eighteenth century. Eighteenth-century, loving fathers were often dubbed “tender.” William Williams, a merchant and a politician from Lebanon, Connecticut, comforted his dying father in 1776 saying, “that God had given us one of the best & Tenderest Fathers.” A tender father like Williams loved his “Children greatly.”¹⁰⁵ The young Peter Thatcher of Boston marked in his diary the passing of a “kind & tender Father” in 1765.¹⁰⁶ Benjamin Bangs of Eastham, Massachusetts, mourning the loss of his father-in-law in 1763, remarked, “A tender compassionate father he was.”¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Edwards in 1721 thanked his father for a recent letter “and the Abundance of Fatherlike Tenderness therein expressed.”¹⁰⁸ The lack of such endearments, however, cannot be interpreted

intuitively as a lack of feeling. Without the familiar language of sentiment as a guide, we need to listen for a different “voice.”

When faced with the tragedy of losing a child, how did these men demonstrate their feelings? A man nursed his offspring with peculiar attention to the child’s spiritual health, while the woman cared for the child’s more corporal needs. A man bargained with God for the blessing of health in his family. These Puritan men took out their religious arsenal to counter the assault on their families. They risked even their souls to save their children. Some thought themselves to blame for a child’s sufferings. If a father lost his battle, he struggled with his anger and grief, trying to wrestle meaning from tragedy.

Samuel Sewall had a disturbing dream in 1695.

Last night I dream’d that all my Children were dead except Sarah; which did distress me sorely with Reflexions on my Omission of Duty towards them, as well as Breaking oft the Hopes I had of them. The Lord help me thankfully and fruitfully to enjoy them, and let that be a means to awaken me.¹⁰⁹

His fears were justified. Of his fourteen children, only six grew to adulthood. He outlived all but three.¹¹⁰ A year after this fateful dream, Sewall received “the amazing news of my Wive’s hard Time and my Son’s being Still-born.” He came immediately home “to find a sweet desirable Son dead.” He recorded, “These Tears I weep over my abortive Son.”¹¹¹ Sewall’s tears would return often as he made trip after trip to the family tomb.

Samuel Bradstreet, physician and eldest child of the famous poet Anne Bradstreet, wrote to his father, Simon, in 1678 of the loss of his son with similar emotion. “Ye 26th of Decmr last the Lord took from me my Dear Son Simon whom I cannot remember wth out tears.” He embellished, “he was a lovely child Exceeding forward, Every way desireable, most dearly beloved by me in this life and as much lamented since his death.”¹¹² On the death of Wait Winthrop’s firstborn son in 1679/80, he agonized to his brother, Fitz-John, “I lost my hope, and the greatest part of my comfort.”¹¹³

As a child weakened, both mother and father provided comfort. Women nursed their sick offspring with extraordinary stamina. Cotton Mather’s pregnant wife in 1709 “watch’d last Night, (as she had done every other Night) with the languishing Child.” Her vigil was interrupted when “she suddenly fell into her Travail.” The baby came so quickly that only a few women had reached the house to attend her, and she had not even reached “her own Chamber, and safely.”¹¹⁴ Children died in the arms of the women who nursed them. Samuel Sewall lost his son Henry in 1685. He listened intently to his breathing. “He makes no noise save by a kind of snoring as it breathed.” Eventually, even this quiet breathing ceased. Henry “Died in Nurse Hill’s Lap.” Two years later, he lost his son Stephen with “two Teeth cut” to convulsions. Stephen likewise died “in Nurse Hill’s Arms.”¹¹⁵ Fathers were, nonetheless, a presence in the sick-room. Cotton Mather read to his beloved daughter Katy in 1716. “Much of my Time, of late, has been spent in sitting by her with Essayes to strengthen her in her Agonies.”¹¹⁶ But the chores of nursing fell to women.

“I wrestled with the *God of Jacob*, for my threatened Family, as once *Jacob* did for his.” Cotton Mather, like other fathers, braved God’s wrath to save a beloved child from death. He set aside a day of fasting and prayer in 1699. “I sett myself particularly to consider, what special Duties, the Condition of my Child should awaken me unto.” He

proposed to spend more time teaching all his children “charming Lessons, of Religion.” He also promised to “promote *Schools for Children*, in my Neighbourhood.” He would increase the number of “*pastoral Visits*” to his neighbors and give them copies of his book, “*Family well-ordered*.” He would even write a similar book to be translated into the “*Indian Tongue*.” Despite his efforts to bargain with the Lord for his daughter’s life, she continued to decline. Mather felt he had assurance from the Lord that the child would live, but her condition did not reflect his confidence. He determined to fast and pray again, “Wherefore, being in Distress, lest my *Particular Faith*, should prove but a Fancy, and a Folly, and End in Confusion.” He feared not only his daughter’s death but losing his own faith. He was rewarded for his piety. “Now, behold the Effect of *Prayer and Faith!* On this very day, the Child began to recover.”¹¹⁷

In 1699/00, Mather made similar efforts for his son, who “was taken with *Convulsion-Fits*.” He again prayed and fasted, but this time he took a different approach in his petition to the Lord.

I then heartily and cheerfully gave away my Son, unto the Lord Jesus Christ, professing, that if the Child may not be a *Servant* to His, I was far from desiring the Life of it; but, if the Child might serve Him exceedingly, I cry’d unto him, to speak for it, the Word, by which it might live.

The child continued to be racked by convulsions, forcing his father “*thrice* to repair unto the Prayer-hearing Lord.” Mather became more desperate: “*Father, if it may be, lett the Cup* (the funeral Cup for this Son) *pass from me; Yett not my Will, but thine be done.*” Again, Mather and his child were granted a reprieve.¹¹⁸ Although clearly more contrite, he also offered the possibility of his son’s service in exchange for his recovery.

Thomas Shepard made “many arguments to presse the Lord” for the life of his infant son in 1635. His son had a “sore mouth” that interfered with his nursing. As his wife began to recover from her delivery, his son grew worse. Shepard reasoned with the Lord. He, like Mather, offered up the child to the Lord’s service. He would take the saving of this child as a “kindnes” like “a fruit in season.” He even scolded that when things were most bleak “was the Lords time to remember to helpe.” If denied his request “my soule would be discouraged from seeking to him because I sought for the first & could not preuayle for his life, & this was sore if the Lord should not heare me for this.” Shepard scolded God for his lack of mercy and threatened him with the loss of his love. He ended his supplications with reference to Jesus’ healing of the sick and his hope that God would see fit to heal his infant son.¹¹⁹ Shepard, like Mather, wrestled with the Lord and his own religious doubts when confronted by the tragedy of childhood illness. Both men stood on the cusp of hubris as they negotiating with God for the life of their children. They cajoled, wheedled, and even threatened their maker. They risked their souls to save their children.

If his appeals went unheard, such a father was forced to examine his own religious condition. Had God visited such a calamity on his child because of his sinfulness? Thomas Shepard believed that “the Lord doth strike his people in that child they take too much affection in.”¹²⁰ He received such a blow in 1635 while struggling to sail to the safety of New England. While in transit, “my first borne child very precious to my soule & dearly beloued of me was smitten with sicknes.” He begged the Lord to save his son. “The Lord now shewd me my weake fayth want of feare pride carnall content immoderate loue of creatures, & of my child especially.”¹²¹ This difficult lesson ended

in the death of his sick child. His father's love led to his demise. Nicholas Wyeth, one of Shepard's parishioners, likewise felt himself the cause of his child's death in the 1640s. His lack of faith had forced a just God to take his heart's joy. "He gave me a child after my own heart and God hath taken it from me and 'tis so just for I have gone on so formally and coldly since I came here. Though I have enjoyed much in public yet I have been very unfruitful and unchristianlike."¹²² As Samuel Sewall followed the funeral procession to bury his "Little Henry" in 1685, he also considered the righteousness of God in this most recent dispensation. "The Lord humble me kindly in respect of all my Enmity against Him, and let his breaking my Image in my Son be a means of it."¹²³ A sinful father could not successfully petition a benevolent God for his child's life.

Forced to acknowledge helplessness in the face of divine power, a defeated father struggled to find comfort. For some, their faith provided them the hope of meeting their children again in heaven. Cotton Mather watched his young son Samuel suffer for two days in 1700/01, "more than an hundred very terrible Fitts." When the pitiful infant finally died, his father spoke of his remarkable "Composure of Mind."¹²⁴ He preached on the trials of Job. Although buffeted by the power of the Lord, he still proclaimed, "I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth."¹²⁵ Cotton Mather made this expectation explicit on the gravestone of his newborn son, "RESERVED FOR A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION."¹²⁶ Mather looked forward to the time when his whole family would be reunited "*in the Kingdome of God, World without End.*"¹²⁷

Less hopeful, but equally necessary, was a pious father's ability to acknowledge his weakness and resign himself to the will of God. Acceptance meant admitting the limited power of man compared to the strength of heaven. Even the most loving father could not save his child if the Lord decreed otherwise. Wait Winthrop urged his son John in 1714 to accept that the death of his five-month-old daughter Elizabeth was God's will. The child died while visiting his wife's father. Wait Winthrop broke the news to his son.

And now let us with humble submition be silent under the soverain good pleasure of that God who does every thing for the best. Let us not say, if this had been avoyed, or that been don, it might haue been otherwise. No; God's holy will is reveled; therefore let us say with him, The Lord giues and the Lord takes away, and blessed be his name.

There was no point in wondering what could have been done to save her because God had determined to take her. Rather than mourning, Winthrop urged his son to be thankful. "And let us be thankfull that he has spared any of us when in any danger. He has yet left you fower sweet babes, and I pray and hope for his blessing on them."¹²⁸ The elder Winthrop had lived through similar hardships. When his son Joseph was born "wanting his right hand," he counted it a "sore affliction." He reminded himself, nonetheless, that the Lord was "Rituous in all his wayes, and it is less then we haue deserved."¹²⁹ When Cotton Mather lost his daughter Mehetabel in 1695/96, he revealed his struggle. "The Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, helped mee, I hope, to a patient and cheerful Submission, under this Calamity: tho' I sensibly found, an Assault of Temptation from Satan, accompanying of it."¹³⁰

The illness or death of a child could be used to strengthen religious conviction. The recovery of his daughter Nanny from "a Pain of an unknown Original in her lower Bowels" moved Cotton Mather in 1700 to praise the "prayer-hearing Lord." The phy-

sicians had given the child up for dead. Mather trusted in the power of God and received his reward. "Behold, the *Trial of my Faith!*"¹³¹ Mather saw the unfortunate illnesses of his children as opportunities for pious instruction. "*What use ought Parents to make of Disasters befalling their Children.*"¹³² He hoped his children would turn to God in the face of this awesome power. "Oh! What Endeavours must I use, that my living Children may improve the Death of their lovely Sister, to their best Advantage!"¹³³ He reminded his children of the fragileness of life and the necessity of preparation for death. When a child recovered from an illness, he lectured all of his children on the need for thankfulness, "and make him know, what the glorious Lord, that makes him well, does expect from him."¹³⁴

Thomas Shepard left a record "of gods great kindnes" to his son that he "may learne to know & loue the great & most high god: the god of his father." God had saved his son Thomas from a sore mouth at birth, a sudden fall in his mother's arms, another sore mouth that prevented him from eating, and finally an eye infection that threatened his sight. He urged his son to give "thy hart & whole soule & body to him that hath bin so carefull of thee when thou couldst not care for thy selfe."¹³⁵ These adversities had strengthened Shepard's faith, and he hoped they would be equally instructive to his son. A father could love and nurture his children even in the face of his own helplessness. He could tend to the recovered child's soul or redouble his efforts with the siblings left behind. A father also ideally reaped a rich spiritual harvest for himself. Increase Mather spoke of this potential in a letter to his sister.

There is a memorable Passage, in yt Booke caled ye fulfilling of Scriptures (p. 49i) of a good man who wn his son was dead He went alone to pour out his soul unto, & afterwards was cheerful (as Hannah you know was no more sad after she had prayed) some wondered at him for it but he told ym yt if he might but enjoy such another manifestation of God as in yt private prayer Hee had met wth He could be Content to bury a son every day.¹³⁶

With death came loss and opportunity. A father's focus shifted from hopeful prayer to resignation and pious instruction.

A Puritan father expressed his feelings for his offspring freely when death loomed. Careful stewardship of their souls revealed his deep emotions. Such a father even braved hell itself to ensure his child's recovery. The challenge, as always for these religious men, was to love their maker more than their children.

With God as their model, fathers in colonial New England struggled to parent with both firmness and affection. Fathers loved their children in both centuries and worried over their futures. They monitored their growth and educated their minds. Some lavished their little ones with attention. Others showed their concern through careful heed to their education and spiritual well-being. Sentiment came to a father's lips easier in the eighteenth century, but seventeenth-century Puritan men also loved their children. Forms of expression, not feelings, changed. When a child teetered on the edge of eternity, a father wept.

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NOTES

1. John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Philip J. Greven Jr., *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970); Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: New American Library, 1977); Philip Greven, *Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991); Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970). In contrast to this perspective is the older work of Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). For the role of fatherhood, see E. Anthony Rotundo, "American Fatherhood: A Historical Perspective," *American Behavioral Scientist* 29 (September/October 1985): 8-10, and John Demos, *Past, Present, and Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 41-67.

2. For a summary of the literature maligning Puritan parenting, see Ross W. Beales Jr., "In Search of the Historical Child: Miniature Adulthood and Youth in Colonial New England," *American Quarterly* 27 (October 1975): 379-98. Philip Greven is probably the most outspoken proponent of this perspective in both *Protestant Temperament* and *Spare the Child*.

3. This analysis has been culled from my book *Ye Heart of a Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Early New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). I examined records in Connecticut and Massachusetts between 1620 and the Revolution in this article as well as in the book. Included are areas that were incorporated into these two colonies by 1782 (i.e., Plymouth, New Haven). Both of these colonies were heavily influenced by Puritanism. Although Puritanism changed, evolved, and withered by the end of this period, even in these colonies Puritan concepts of family government and male behavior remained influential. See Morgan, *Puritan Family*; Demos, *Little Commonwealth*; Greven, *Protestant Temperament*; Gerald F. Moran and Maris A. Vinovskis, "The Puritan Family and Religion: A Critical Reappraisal," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (January 1982): 29-63.

4. This study is not the result of a sampling of material; instead, I used all the documents I could find that spoke to the male perspective on fatherhood. This meant focusing primarily, for this group of men, on diaries and collections of family papers. I examined approximately 140 manuscript collections, both published and unpublished.

5. Keith Wrightson has made this argument for early modern England. See Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1982), 109. Likewise, John R. Gillis argues that fathers were central to child rearing in England before the late eighteenth century. See Gillis, "Bringing Up Father: British Paternal Identities, 1700 to Present," *Masculinities* 3 (fall 1995): 1-27.

6. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). Gilligan has been criticized as being an essentialist, arguing that differences between men and women are fixed and timeless. See Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (December 1986): 1065. This study turns Gilligan's notion of women as innately moral on its head. Men did and do make similarly humane choices. Our misreading of their language, however, precludes this kind of interpretation.

7. Lawrence Stone began the debate with his discussion of the aristocratic English family. Historians of Europe and America have continued to test his assumptions. See Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977) and *Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England, 1660-1753* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Those who agree with some of Stone's general notions, if not always with his chronology, include Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge:

Harvard University Press, 1983); Martine Segalen, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family: Rural France in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Carol Z. Stearns and Peter N. Stearns, eds., *Emotion and Social Change: Toward a New Psychohistory* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988); Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Jeffrey R. Watt, *The Making of Modern Marriage: Matrimonial Control and the Rise of Sentiment in Neuchâtel, 1550-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). Alan Macfarlane has even found examples of romantic love stretching back to the thirteenth century. See Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 189. More vehement criticism of Stone's conclusions have come from two works that came out about the same time: Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), and Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Academy Press, 1978). The debate also rages in the colonial literature. See Morgan, *Puritan Family*; Greven, *Protestant Temperament*; Daniel Blake Smith, *Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); and Helena M. Wall, *Fierce Communion: Family and Community in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). The contrast between seventeenth- and eighteenth-century family patterns might have been less stark for the common sort. See, for example, Roger Thompson, *Sex in Middlesex: Popular Mores in a Massachusetts County, 1649-1699* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986).

8. See Segalen, *Love and Power*; Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450-1700* (London: Longman, 1984); Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*; Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England*; Steven Ozment, *Magdalena and Balthasar: An Intimate Portrait of Life in 16th-Century Europe Revealed in the Letters of a Nuremberg Husband and Wife* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986); Ingram, *Church Courts*; Stearns and Stearns, eds., *Emotion and Social Change*; Watt, *Making of Modern Marriage*.

9. Cotton Mather, *A Family Well-Ordered* (Boston, 1699), 22.

10. Cotton Mather, *Family Well-Ordered*; Benjamin Wadsworth, *The Well-Ordered Family* (Boston, 1712). Laurel Thatcher Ulrich notes this pattern for funeral sermons. See Ulrich, "Vertuous Women Found: New England Ministerial Literature, 1668-1735," *American Quarterly* 28 (spring 1976): 39. Alternatively, Jane Kamensky argues that *parents* meant *father* and *children* referred to *sons*. See Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue: The Politics of Speech in Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 239 n. 22.

11. Jonathan Edwards to Rev. Benjamin Colman, D.D., May 30, 1735, Edwards Collection, Franklin Trask Library, Andover-Newton Theological School, Newton Center, Mass. (hereafter cited as A-NTS).

12. Benjamin Trumbull to Parents, November 24, 1765, Benjamin Trumbull Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn. (hereafter cited as YUL).

13. Diary of Samuel Chandler, January 1, 1773, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Mass.

14. Cotton Mather, *Family Well-Ordered*, 41.

15. Cotton Mather, *Diary of Cotton Mather*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1911), 1:486.

16. Exod. 20:12.

17. Cotton Mather, *Family Well-Ordered*, 45.

18. The idea of correction expressed in these passages included anything from a reproof to the use of the rod. Philip Greven has a more narrow interpretation in *Spare the Child*.

19. Heb. 12:6.

20. John Davenport, *Letters of John Davenport: Puritan Divine*, ed. Isabel MacBeath Calder (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 59.

21. G. Selleck Silliman to Joseph Fish, May 13, 1780, Silliman Family Papers, YUL.
22. Increase Mather, "Diary of Increase Mather, 1675-1691," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 13 (1900): 344.
23. Ps. 68:5.
24. Michael Wigglesworth, *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657: The Conscience of a Puritan*, ed. Edmund S. Morgan (New York: Harper and Row, 1946), 50.
25. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 1:269.
26. George F. Dow, ed., *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Salem: Essex Institute, 1911-1978), 2:416-17.
27. M. Sawyer to Rev. Ezra Weld, May 18, 1776, Farnham Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass. (hereafter cited as MHS).
28. The Native Americans involved in this attack on Deerfield were probably the Caughnawaga (French Mohawk) and Abenaki. Richard I. Melvoin, *New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield* (New York: Norton, 1989), 215-16. For a more detailed analysis of this family's ordeal, see John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Vintage, 1994). Under the Julian calendar, the first day of a new year was on March 25. Dates falling between January 1 and March 24 of each year appear with two years divided by a slash. The Gregorian calendar that eliminated this system was used in England as of 1752 and slowly took hold in the colonies after this date.
29. Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark, eds., *Puritans among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption, 1676-1724* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 179.
30. Cotton Mather, *Family Well-Ordered*, 22-23.
31. Wadsworth, *Well-Ordered Family*, 45.
32. Cotton Mather, *Family Well-Ordered*, 18; Wadsworth, *Well-Ordered Family*, 58.
33. Cotton Mather, *Family Well-Ordered*, 19.
34. Wadsworth, *Well-Ordered Family*, 68.
35. There were no godparents in these ceremonies; rather, the community acted as witness. See Daniel Scott Smith, "Child-Naming Practices, Kinship Ties, and Change in Family Attitudes in Hingham, Massachusetts, 1641 to 1880," *Journal of Social History* 18 (summer 1985): 554. Those who could baptize their children in the early years after settlement were church members. After 1662, the Halfway Covenant allowed those who had been baptized but had not become church members to baptize their children as well. As the eighteenth century progressed, the ceremony became increasingly available to all who desired the covenant for their children. See E. Brooks Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 143-59, 169-96.
36. Cotton Mather, *Family Well-Ordered*, 14.
37. John R. Gillis makes a similar argument for early modern England. See Gillis, "Bringing Up Father," 6-11.
38. Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729*, ed. M. Halsey Thomas (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 1:87, 133, 264.
39. John J. Waters briefly makes note of this joint decision-making process in "Naming and Kinship in New England: Guilford Patterns and Usage, 1693-1759," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 138 (July 1984): 161; David Hackett Fischer claims the decision was the man's in "Forenames and the Family in New England: An Exercise in Historical Onomastics," in *Generations and Change: Genealogical Perspectives in Social History*, ed. Robert M. Taylor Jr. and Ralph J. Crandall (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986), 223.
40. Thomas Shepard, "The Autobiography of Thomas Shepard," *Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Transactions* 27 (November 1930): 353-54.
41. Daniel Scott Smith argues that this very common practice reflected high mortality rates and, therefore, the finality of death rather than a lack of awareness of a child's uniqueness as an individual. See Smith, "Child-Naming Practices," 546.

42. James Cogswell [Jr.] to James Cogswell [Sr.], June 20, 1777, Cogswell Family Papers, YUL.
43. G. Selleck Silliman to John Noyes, August 24, 1779, Silliman Family Papers, YUL.
44. Most common of course was the naming of children for parents. See Smith, "Child-Naming Practices," 546-51; Waters, "Naming and Kinship," 172-73.
45. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:264.
46. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 1:307.
47. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:175. For the Joseph he refers to here, see Ezek. 37:16-19 and Fischer, "Forenames and the Family," 222.
48. Fischer, "Forenames and the Family," 224.
49. John Ballantine Diary, transcription, June 13, 1762, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.
50. Diary of William Cooper, December 15, 1765, MHS.
51. Waters, "Naming and Kinship," 162; Smith, "Child-Naming Practices," 544; Fischer, "Forenames and the Family," 222.
52. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 2:59.
53. Daniel Scott Smith, "Continuity and Discontinuity in Puritan Naming: Massachusetts, 1771," *William and Mary Quarterly* 51 (January 1994), 67-91.
54. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 1:218.
55. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:324.
56. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 2:251.
57. Num. 11:12; Isa. 49:23.
58. For more information on the cultural implications of breast-feeding, see Ross W. Beales Jr., "Nursing and Weaning in an Eighteenth-Century New England Household," in *Families and Children: Dublin Seminar in New England Folklife: Annual Proceedings 1985*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University, 1987), 48-63, and Marylynn Salmon, "The Cultural Significance of Breastfeeding and Infant Care in Early Modern England and America," *Journal of Social History* 28 (winter 1994): 247-69.
59. Diary of Peter Thatcher, May 18, 1680, MHS.
60. Ebenezer Parkman, *The Diary of Ebenezer Parkman, 1703-1782*, ed. Francis G. Walett (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1974), 56.
61. Diary of Ebenezer Parkman, October 20, 1755, MHS.
62. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:41.
63. Diary of Peter Thatcher, May 19, 1680, MHS.
64. James Cogswell [Jr.] to James Cogswell [Sr.], August 3, 1777, Cogswell Family Papers, YUL.
65. Diary of Peter Thatcher, September 24, 1679, MHS.
66. Parkman, *Diary*, 100.
67. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:482-83.
68. Parkman, *Diary*, 14.
69. Eliphalet Pearson to Mrs. Mascarene, March 15, 1783, Park Family Papers, YUL.
70. John Hull, "The Diaries of John Hull," *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* 3 (1857): 149.
71. M. Byles to Mary Byles, May 7, 1766, Byles Family Papers, MHS.
72. Mather Byles [Jr.] and Rebecca to Mather Byles [Sr.], February 21, 1763, Byles Family Papers, MHS.
73. Eliphalet Pearson to Doctor Edward A. Holyoke, June 10, 1782, Park Family Papers, YUL.
74. Eliphalet Pearson to sister, December 22, 1782, Park Family Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, YUL.
75. Ezra Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, ed. Franklin Bowditch Dexter (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 2:200.

76. G. Selleck Silliman and Mary Silliman to Joseph Fish, July 31, 1778, Silliman Family Papers, YUL.
77. G. Selleck to Joseph Fish, November 20, 1780, Silliman Family Papers, YUL.
78. Oliver Ellsworth to Nabby Ellsworth, July 17, 1781, Oliver Ellsworth Correspondence and Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Conn. (hereafter cited as CHS).
79. G. Selleck Silliman to Joseph Fish, June 23, 1778, Silliman Family Papers, YUL.
80. Mather Byles [Jr.] and Rebecca Byles to Mather Byles [Sr.], February 21, 1763, Byles Family Papers, MHS.
81. G. S. Silliman to [Joseph Fish], December 7, 1777, Silliman Family Papers, YUL.
82. Benjamin Trumbull [Sr.] to Benjamin Trumbull [Jr.], September 27, 1775, Benjamin Trumbull Papers, YUL.
83. Josiah Cotton Memoirs, 1726-1756, 162-67, MHS.
84. William Samuel Johnson to Nancy, January 25, 1769, William Samuel Johnson Correspondence and Papers, CHS.
85. Ibid.
86. Gen. Samuel McClellan to John McClellan, December 30, 1782, McClellan Papers, CHS.
87. Josiah Cotton Memoirs, 1726-1756, 165, MHS.
88. Timothy Edwards to Esther Edwards, August 7, 1711, Edwards Collection, Franklin Trask Library, A-NTS.
89. William Samuel Johnson to Mrs. Johnson, October 23, 1770, William Samuel Johnson Correspondence and Papers, CHS.
90. Ezekiel Williams to John Williams, December 6, 1779, Williams Papers, CHS.
91. "Last Sayings of Rev. Solomon Williams," February 26, 1776, Williams Papers, CHS.
92. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 2:265.
93. John Reyner and William Brewster to John Cotton, August 24, 1639, Cotton Family Papers, MHS.
94. Elisha Niles Diary, 1764-1845, 9, CHS.
95. Stiles, *Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, 1:48-49.
96. Benjamin Trumbull [Sr.] to Benjamin Trumbull [Jr.], September 27, 1775, Benjamin Trumbull Papers, YUL.
97. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 1:534-37.
98. Ibid., 2:25.
99. Josiah Cotton Memoirs, 1726-56, [illegible], MHS.
100. Thomas Williams to Ezekiel Williams, March 12, 1776, Williams Papers, CHS.
101. David E. Stannard, "Death and the Puritan Child," in *Death in America*, ed. David E. Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 9-29.
102. Benjamin Trumbull [Sr.] to Benjamin Trumbull [Jr.], September 27, 1775, Benjamin Trumbull Papers, YUL.
103. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 2:149, 153.
104. Vaughan and Clark, *Puritans among the Indians*, 209-10.
105. "Last Sayings of Rev. Solomon Williams," February 26, 1776, Williams Papers, CHS.
106. Diary of Peter Thatcher, July 9, 1765, MHS.
107. Benjamin Bangs Diary, January 30, 1763, 3:119, Bangs Collection, MHS.
108. Jonathan Edwards to Timothy Edwards, March 1, 1721, Edwards Collection, Franklin Trask Library, A-NTS.
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110. T. B. Strandness, *Samuel Sewall: A Puritan Portrait* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967), 122.
111. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:350.
112. Samuel Bradstreet, "Ever Hond. Father," February 18, 1678, Cotton Family Papers, MHS.

113. *The Winthrop Papers, Part IV, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, vol. 8 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1863-92), 419.
114. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 2:8-9.
115. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:89, 145.
116. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 2:388.
117. *Ibid.*, 1:303-5.
118. *Ibid.*, 1:336-37.
119. Shepard, "Autobiography of Thomas Shepard," 354.
120. Thomas Shepard, *God's Plot: The Paradoxes of Puritan Piety, Being the Autobiography and Journal of Thomas Shepard*, ed. Michael McGiffert (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 174.
121. Shepard, "Autobiography," 381-82.
122. Thomas Shepard, *Thomas Shepard's Confessions*, ed. George Selement and Bruce C. Woolley, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Collections*, vol. 58 (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1981), 195.
123. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:90.
124. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 1:382.
125. Job 19:25.
126. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 1:164.
127. *Ibid.*, 174.
128. *The Winthrop Papers, Correspondence of Wait Winthrop (continued), Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1928), 5:300.
129. *Winthrop Papers, Part IV*, 493.
130. Cotton Mather, *Diary*, 1:185.
131. *Ibid.*, 376-77.
132. *Ibid.*, 294.
133. *Ibid.*, 2:389.
134. *Ibid.*, 74.
135. Shepard, "Autobiography," 353-56.
136. Increase Mather to "Sister," January 22, 1676, Cotton Family Papers, MHS.