

Once I was a slave but now I am a son; once I was dead but now I am alive; once I was darkness but now I am light in the Lord; once I was a child of wrath, an heir of hell, but now I am an heir of heaven; once I was Satan's bond-servant but now I am God's freeman; once I was under the spirit of bondage but now I am under the Spirit of adoption that seals up to me the remission of my sins the justification of my person and the salvation of my soul. - Thomas Brooks

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM
AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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111. Q. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, which is, Give us this day our daily bread (Mt. 6:11), we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them (Pr. 30:8; Gn 28:20; 1 Tim. 4:4, 5).

112. Q. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, which is, And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (Mt. 6:12), we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins (Ps. 51:1, 2, 7, 9; Dan. 9:17-19); which we are rather encouraged to ask because of his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others (Lk. 11:4; Mt. 18:35).

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Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THE PLOWING OF THE WICKED

An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin. Proverbs 21:4

It is reported that on his death-bed the agnostic philosopher Spinoza (1632-77) was asked if he had made his peace with God to which he answered “we never fought.” While he had a concept of God, it is obvious he fell far short of any concept of the absolute holiness of God and the hatred of God for sin. Such is the error of many in their misplaced concepts of religion and even of Christianity. To many, sin is limited to the actual deeds committed and these are subject to their own interpretation as to their degree of wickedness and consequence. It would seem that in every age there are arbitrary definitions set forth as to what constitutes sin. The summary thought here is given a few verses earlier: *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. Proverbs 21:2.* Of course, the missing element is a proper consideration of who the Lord is, His holiness and His sovereignty.

A true view of sin can only be had where there is a proper view of the opposite. This was abundantly provided in the first coming of our Lord. He is called, “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Jeremiah 23:6. With this in view we can understand the meaning of the Apostle when he declares: *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Romans 14:23.* It is a simple concept to the regenerate mind that those things done while living by faith and through the Holy Spirit embracing the things of Christ are not sin – they are good works. Such an idea is to the same

degree foreign to the unregenerate mind. The absence of Christ and His grace renders all such things as antagonistic toward God.

In considering this passage, it is not difficult to see the offensiveness of the first two things mentioned. The “high look” which is the product of a “proud heart” is sometimes offensive to others. Yet, those so offended are often of the same kind in that they apply an arbitrary standard of judgment. The pride of those held in contempt is seen as an injury to their own pride.

The offensiveness of these things to God is quite another matter. There is simply no place for it among men. Not only did Jesus establish the absolute standard for righteousness, he also set the absolute standard for humility: *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:7-8.* One might argue that He was special and that we are different if it were not for the fact that a few verses earlier Paul had enjoined, *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Philippians 2:5.*

But, what of the reference to plowing? Many years ago I listened intently to a dear brother in preaching refer to this passage in graphic terms. He described this pastoral scene where the farmer trudged along behind his horse plowing his field. At the end of each long row the assessment was – sin! How could this be? How could such an innocent, even commendable

thing be thought to be sin? Yet, here is the declaration of the Word of God. The difference is the absence of faith and therefore of any consideration of the Lord. Some translate the word “plowing” as light in reference to the industry and life of the individual. The conclusion is the same. If it is not pursued in a context of faith and walking with Christ, it is sin. Plowing is not in and of itself sinful as compared with drunkenness and debauchery. It is rather that all the activities of one outside of Christ is accompanied by and motivated by sinful motivations and are without reference to serving God.

This leads to another arbitrary conclusion by many. The thought of wickedness is only in reference to those deeds considered heinous by mankind in general. In biblical terms there are only two possibilities. One is either wicked or righteous. To label a relatively good citizen as wicked is offensive to many and certainly not politically correct in our day. Our Lord declared that a man could only have one of two masters and Paul leaves no doubt as to the god of the unregenerate. See Ephesians 2:2. We often hear of the commendation of good people in the absence of any profession of faith. The conclusion of many is that such is enough to warrant salvation.

It was said by the Father only of Christ that, “this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” If this is so, all others are excluded from such approval. In order to please the Father much was required and only the Son could accomplish it. A perfect life is required of all who would find acceptance with God. This was accomplished by our Lord in the form of sinful flesh. A perfect sacrifice was required which none among men were able to offer for their sin. A perfect Priest was required to make this offering of a perfectly willing sacrifice in such a manner as to be approved of God. The sacrifice required no less than all that was deserved by those for whom He died. Only One could meet these requirements and that is Jesus Christ the Righteous who having obtained satisfaction arose in victory. This was completion of a perfect transaction wherein payment of the sin debt of all believers was accomplished. A perfect work of regeneration by His Holy Spirit seals the fact of these things to the hearts of those whose who possess the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ and they are the partakers of the divine nature.

Apart from these things all is sin, even the plowing of the wicked. Without faith it is impossible to please Him...” *bhs*

REFUSING TO FORGIVE

If we refuse to forgive, we have stepped into dangerous waters. First, refusing to forgive is to put ourselves in the place of God, as though vengeance were our prerogative, not his. Second, unforgiveness says God’s wrath is insufficient. For the unbeliever, we are saying that an eternity in hell is not enough; they need our slap in the face or cold shoulder to “even the scales” of justice. For the believer, we are saying that Christ’s humiliation and death are not enough. In other words, we shake our fists at God and say, “Your standards may have been satisfied, but my standard is higher!” Finally, refusing to forgive is the highest form of arrogance. Here we stand forgiven. And as we bask in the forgiveness of a perfectly holy and righteous God, we turn to our brother and say, “My sins are forgivable, but yours are not.” In other words, we act as though the sins of others are too significant to forgive while simultaneously believing that ours are not significant enough to matter.”

“Forgiveness also frees you from the unbearable weight of holding on to an offense. It has

been said that holding on to unforgiveness is like drinking poison while hoping the other person dies. When we refuse to forgive others, we give them a level of control over us. Some of us are being controlled by a person who is no longer alive as a direct result of our unwillingness to forgive. We hold the debt close to us like a cherished possession, not realizing that we are in fact the one being possessed. Let it go, friend.”

— Voddie T. Baucham Jr., *Joseph and the Gospel of Many Colors: Reading an Old Story in a New Way*

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PRAYER – John Dagg

Adam became a living soul when God breathed into him the breath of life: [Gen 2:7] and from that time, the process of breathing is evidence that life exists. Prayer may be regarded as the breathing of the spiritual man. Sufficient proof was given that Saul of Tarsus had been converted, when the Lord said, "Behold, he prayeth." [Acts 9:11] True prayer proceeds from the Holy Spirit, imparting spiritual life, and enkindling those spiritual desires which find their vent in prayer. These desires are breathed into the bosom of God, in the exercise of filial confidence in him; and, being in accordance with the will of God, [Rom 8:27] they are regarded by him with favor, and obtain answers of grace and peace. From this view of prayer, we may see the propriety of the Apostle's injunction: "Pray without ceasing." [1 Thess 5:17] The cessation of prayer would be the cessation of spiritual life. A form of words may not be incessantly used; but spiritual desires must ever have place in the heart; and the habit must ever exist, of looking to God for the fulfilment of these desires. This constant intercourse with God is the life of faith. We live with him, converse with him, and enjoy communion with him, through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us. We often complain that our prayers are not answered; but it would be profitable to inquire, what those unanswered petitions were. Did we ask for wealth, power, and long life? If so, our desires were carnal, and did not proceed from the Spirit of God. We must learn to regulate our desires by the will of God, and our prayers will be sure to obtain a gracious hearing. Sincere prayer begins with the very commencement of spiritual life. An infant's cries express its wants, before it knows how to express them in words; and the tender mother will understand this inarticulate language. So the desires of the spiritual infant may be signified by "groanings which cannot be uttered." [Rom 8:26] but the Lord understands these groans, and knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, who maketh intercession for them. As the lamb in the bosom of the kind shepherd; as the babe on the breast of its tender mother; so the spiritual babe reposes on the bosom of eternal love; and in that bosom breathes all its desires. Spiritual life, evidenced at first by the breathing of prayer, is afterwards indicated by spiritual growth. To be spiritual, we must not ever remain babes in religion. Paul said to the Corinthians, "I could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." [1 Cor 3:1] Spiritual life is progressive, and tends to make us men, strong men in Christ Jesus. The truth of God supplies the milk for babes, and the strong meat for those who have attained to greater age. [1 Pet 2:2; Heb 5:12] We have been engaged in the study of this truth; and it will be well for us to inquire whether our spiritual life has been nourished by it, and whether we are growing in faith, and love, and every grace. Unless the truth strengthens the inner man, and gives increased vigor in the Christian life, our study of it has been in vain.

“Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.”

Martin Luther