

“A truly humble man is sensible of his natural distance from God; of his dependence on Him; of the insufficiency of his own power and wisdom; and that it is by God's power that he is upheld and provided for, and that he needs God's wisdom to lead and guide him, and His might to enable him to do what he ought to do for Him.”

— Jonathan Edwards

### GADSBY'S CATECHISM

by William Gadsby (about 1800)

*(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

Question XCIII. Are men able to obtain these blessings by works of righteousness?

Answer. No; sin has rendered man hateful in the sight of God's holy law; made the whole head sick and the whole heart faint; killed him to everything that is good; so that by nature he has neither power nor will to come to Christ, the only way of obtaining the blessings of the gospel.

Isa. 1.5-6; Jn. 1.13 & 3.27 & 6.44; Rom. 8.7-8 & 9.16; 1 Cor. 2.14, Eph. 2.8-9; Tit. 3.5.

Question XCIV. Is it no sin for men to neglect the reading of God's Word and the preaching of the gospel?

Answer. It is a great sin for men to neglect the reading of God's Word; and their neglect of and enmity to the gospel of Christ will add to the everlasting misery of all who have so done, and who die in their sins.

Matt 11.20-24; Jn. 3.18-21 & 5.39-40 & 8.24.

#### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM—In Richwood

#### Services:

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

Volume 9, No. 40

October 2, 2016

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### AS DEAR CHILDREN

*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; Ephesians 5:1*

The ubiquitous “therefore” appears once more and leads us to a precious consideration of our relationship with the Lord. The point of reference may well be the entire contents of the preceding chapter. Or, it could easily be taken as a directive based on the last verse of that chapter. *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32.* In either case we have two considerations here. The first is that we are to be followers of God and it behooves us to consider all we do in that light. The second is that the manner in which we relate to God is equally important.

Christ prayed as to the end He desired for the redeemed: *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: John 17:22.* What a profound revelation as to our identity with the Lord. In that same prayer He references the love of the Father precious: *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. John 17:23.* This is the essence of that love that exists in the Lord's people and is that for which Christ concluded the prayer: *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. John 17:26.* With such a lofty precedent as that presented by our Lord it only follows that we should be found striving to be followers or imitators of God. Certainly, this

is not with regard to His deity and the attributes associated with it; but surely it is related to that which we have witnessed in Christ our Lord and His holiness and the righteousness of God so gloriously displayed in Him.

The fact that the saints are here referred to here as “children” implies that our response is to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a gift to mankind is that of fatherhood. It is blessed to watch the admiration of a devoted child to a devoted parent. It is more than cute that a toddler will find and try to wear his father's shoes. At that point in his life it is likely that he desires to be “just like dad.” He is at ease in the presence of such a father in that he believes that his daddy can and will protect him and provide for his needs and is in all ways a refuge. Furthermore, the child soon begins to attend to the wise counsel of his father and character begins to develop and often results in the observation expressed in the old adage, “like father, like son.” Perhaps this was in the mind of our Lord as He taught the disciples: *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3.*

It is an old human proverb that observes that “Imitation is the highest form of flattery.” In the case of our relationship to the Father, we might believe that “Imitation is a high form of worship and devotion.” It is especially to be noted that in the overall care of the Lord for His children that they are made aware of such

things as mercy, grace, goodness and kindness, all received through Christ our Lord. We would imitate His actions toward us in our relationship to others. We are reminded that *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Matthew 5:7.* We are forgiven and as a necessary result we must be forgiving.

Being a follower of God includes but is not limited to overt action and obedience. To be a follower of God entails full submission and a continual looking to Him. The writer of proverbs expressed it well: *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. Proverbs 3:5.* This is not servile obedience; it is loving submission to our All-Wise Father.

When a person is born again by Holy Spirit and brought by faith to believe the Gospel and fully trust in the accomplishments of the blood of Christ in his behalf he accepts the title “Child of God.” This might be done logically as one is made to understand something of the miraculous work of regeneration along with the fact that our Lord used the thought of natural birth to illustrate it. The endearing terms are further enhanced as we learn that we have been “predestined unto the adoption of children” in the eternal purpose of God. Indeed, “We love

Him because He first loved us.” Adoption is the term used that we might understand a knowing and willful expression of divine love and the action proceeding from it. *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8.* The ultimate expression of the love of God for His children is to be seen in the action in Christ and so we are reminded of John 3:16. And we rejoice as we read of the declaration of Christ in saying: *“...Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”*

It would seem that Paul’s exhortation here is dual. He would have us to know of our duty as the redeemed of the Lord to be sure. And, he would also endeavor to excite the experience of being “Dear Children.” Learned theologians have owned the words of the simple hymn, “Jesus loves me this I know; For the Bible tells me so,” as the greatest truth they have come to know. Any motivation to service, outside the love of God in us and the love of God to us, will fall far short of the mark. The model we follow is Christ as we read: *And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. John 8:29. bhs*

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## Hope for the Worst of Sinners by John Piper

“I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” (Exodus 33:19)

Moses needed hope that God really could have mercy on a stiff-necked people who had just committed idolatry and scorned the God who brought them out of Egypt.

To give Moses the hope and confidence he needed, God said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.” In other words, “My choices do not depend on the degree of evil or good in man but solely upon my sovereign will. Therefore no one can say he is too evil to be shown grace.”

The doctrine of unconditional election is the great doctrine of hope for the worst of sinners. It means that when it comes to being a candidate for grace, your background has nothing to do with God's choice.

If you have not been born again and brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ, do not sink into hopelessness thinking that the excessive rottenness or hardness of your past life is an insurmountable obstacle to God's gracious work in your life. God loves to magnify the freedom of his grace by saving the worst of sinners.

Turn from your sin; call upon the Lord. Even in this devotional he is being gracious to you and giving you strong encouragement to come to him for mercy.

"Come, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

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"It is wrong to suppose that the doctrine of justification by faith alone, that storm center of the Reformation, was the crucial question in the minds of such theologians as Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer, and John Calvin. This doctrine was important to the Reformers because it helped to express and to safeguard their answer to another, more vital, question, namely, whether sinners are wholly helpless in their sin, and whether God is to be thought of as saving them by free, unconditional, invincible grace, not only justifying them for Christ's sake when they come to faith, but also raising them from the death of sin by His quickening Spirit in order to bring them to faith."

- Michael Haykin (from Monergism)

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### The Initiative Against Depression

*And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 1 Kings 19:5*

The angel did not give Elijah a vision, or explain the Scriptures to him, or do anything remarkable; he told Elijah to do the most ordinary thing, viz., to get up and eat. If we were never depressed we should not be alive; it is the nature of a crystal never to be depressed. A human being is capable of depression, otherwise there would be no capacity for exaltation. There are things that are calculated to depress, things that are of the nature of death; and in taking an estimate of yourself, always take into account the capacity for depression.

When the Spirit of God comes He does not give us visions; He tells us to do the most ordinary things conceivable. Depression is apt to turn us away from the ordinary commonplace things of God's creation, but whenever God comes, the inspiration is to do the most natural simple things – the things we would never have imagined God was in, and as we do them we find He is there. The inspiration which comes to us in this way is an initiative against depression; we have to do the next thing and do it in the inspiration of God. If we do a thing in order to overcome depression, we deepen the depression; but if the Spirit of God makes us feel intuitively that we must do the thing, and we do it, the depression is gone. Immediately we arise and obey, we enter on a higher plane of life. Oswald Chambers