

"The damned think they are good. The saved know they are wicked. The damned believe the kingdom of God is for those worthy of it. The saved know the kingdom of God is for those who realize how unworthy they are. The damned believe eternal life is earned. The saved know it is a gift. The damned seek God's commendation. The saved seek His forgiveness." [John MacArthur, Parables, 2015, page 121]

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM
AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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

96. Q. How do baptism and the Lords supper become effectual means of salvation?

A. Baptism and the Lords supper become effectual means of salvation, not for any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ (1 Pet. 3:21; Mt. 3:11; 1 Cor. 3:6, 7), and the working of the Spirit in those that by faith receive them (1 Cor. 12:3; Mt. 28:19).

97.Q. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament instituted by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death, burial, and resurrection; of his being ingrafted into him (Rom. 6:3, 4, 5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27); of remission of sins (Mk. 1:4; Acts 2:38, and 22:16); and of his giving up himself unto God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3, 4).

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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

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THE MIRACLE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. Mark 4:26-27

Throughout His earthly ministry our Lord silenced His opposition with a simple question or an observation. Here, an observable phenomenon is called to the attention of His audience as a way of directing their attention to a far more profound truth. The figure used here would have been well known to all. They knew of sowing seed, of seeing it sprout, and of reaping the result that began with the sowing. But, He would remind them that despite all they understood, they had no explanation for how. We are familiar with the old expression that something is as “boring as watching grass grow.” This points us to the fact we may know that it happens but cannot fully explain the process. It is true that the changes that occur along the way may be observed including things only seen under a microscope. But, none can explain the origin of life begun and continued. In all the research they are eventually brought to the fact that life had to begin from somewhere and that they cannot explain.

Is this a reference to the Kingdom of God in general or to men in particular? There seems to be implications of both. Certainly, the manifestation of the Kingdom in the ministry of our Lord (“the Kingdom is among you”) appeared mysterious. Further increasing the appearance of mystery was the unchecked growth and spread of the Kingdom in the world. But, that which occurs in the life of a believer is even more of a mystery as to its rise and progress of the life of God in the soul

(borrowing thoughts from both Scougal and Doddridge). If such be the case regarding inability to explain things in the natural world, how much more the spiritual? The full importance of “Ye must be born again” is brought to bear here. And, the fact that life so begun is sustained by the originating force.

Two scriptures come quickly to mind. The first is, *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. James 1:18.* Salvation is likened to a seed sown in the heart that germinates (is quickened) into the life of the soul and that after its kind. We, according to Paul, are born of incorruptible seed and are so made partakers of the divine nature. In such descriptions we are made to realize that there can be no human contribution to the process.

The second came as a result of the question of Nicodemus to our Lord. In so many words He told Nicodemus that the process is and ever shall remain a mystery and appear miraculous to all. And so, our Lord answered him thusly: *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. John 3:8.*

It is amazing that we observe so many laboring long and hard to develop methods believing that they can instill life. That wherein the dead in sin are made new creatures in Christ is not the result of a method, a program, or the best wishes of men. It is the height of audacity

to believe that a process of prescribed steps can do what only God can do. The scripture offers no such plan of salvation. We are consistently directed to the sole giver of life through Christ our Lord. Truly, "salvation is of the Lord."

Not only is life begun by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, it is sustained in the same way. It is Christ who "...upholdeth all things by the word of His power..." (Hebrews 2:3). Paul would readily acknowledge the sustaining work of the Lord by his confession to the Corinthians. *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 1 Corinthians 3:6.* He offered no idea as to a method and made no personal claims to enabling the process. The planting he claimed was the Word. The watering of Apollos was the Word. And, it was God who did what no other could.

Christ here declared that men have no explanation for the processes of plant growth. It is a mystery and a miracle. And, as we witness the work of the Spirit we must ask who can explain these things. Christ took the message a step further in describing a reversal of thought. We think of being born and proceeding to death. Yet, He declared, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground*

and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. John 12:24. Of course, He spoke of His own death, but the same applies in that we are "passed from death unto life." Who can explain the miracle of repentance? It does not come of reason; it comes of revelation wherein one is brought to a spiritual confrontation with the holiness of God. Who can explain the miracle of faith in that one has a complete change of heart and is able to cast himself on the mercy of one he has not seen. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Who can explain the life wherein one is brought to mortify the deeds of the flesh and to hate his natural life? Who can explain the fact that we come to love the Lord with all our heart mind and soul? "I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how He could love me, a sinner condemned unclean." We rejoice in it but we cannot explain it.

The process continues ever. Here it is witnessed in "first the blade - life and identity established. Then the "ear," - Christ is formed in us. And then of the fulness received as "Christ in you, the hope of Glory" (see verse 28). We stand in awe of Him and need no explanation! *bhs*

Christ's Standards vs The World's Standards

The standard of the world, and the standard of the Lord Jesus, are indeed widely different. They are more than different. They are flatly contradictory one to the other. Among the children of this world, he is thought the greatest man who has most land, most money, most servants, most rank, and most earthly power. Among the children of God, he is reckoned the greatest who does most to promote the spiritual and temporal happiness of his fellow-creatures. True greatness consists not in receiving, but in giving – not in selfish absorption of good things, but in imparting good to others – not in being served, but in serving – not in sitting still and being ministered to, but in going about and ministering to others.

~ J.C. Ryle

"We must bear in mind that mere resolutions to take more time for prayer and to conquer reluctance to pray will not prove lastingly effective unless there is a whole hearted and absolute surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ." Anonymous

COMPARISONS

A theologically liberal church says 'you are welcome here and you don't need to change a thing.'

A moralistic church says 'you are not welcome here unless you first do something to change and clean yourself up.'

Jesus says, 'sinners are welcome here and I will change your heart to want the things I love.'

The first statement reflects the sinner who has no interest in Christ and has never desired to. He loves his sin and does not want Christ to save him from it. He goes to church to feel good about himself.

The second person reflects a self-righteous spirit which trusts in his own morality (at least partly) as his savior. He likewise goes to church to feel good about himself and thinks he is more deserving of heaven than others.

The third person reflects what Christ promises to every sinner who comes to Jesus by grace through faith - he casts aside all hope in himself, repents of his own self-righteousness - this type of person has been granted a changed heart that desires to obey.

Note: The statement was never intended to be a direct quote of Jesus but, like a sermon, is a summary of his clear teaching throughout the bible. -Monergism

The Bible...Wondrous Book! Book above and beyond all books as a river is beyond a rill in reach, as the sun is above and beyond the tallow dipped in brightness, as Niagara is above and beyond a mill pond in power...Book against which infidelities has thrown its sharpest shafts and strongest spear of scorn and ridicule! Book at which the dissecting knives of modernistic intellectuals have whacked at like butchers...Book against which some snipers from behind some pulpit stands and some college chairs have aimed their ill-grounded propositions, But withal, all its enemies have neither torn one hole in its holy vesture nor stolen one flower from its wondrous garden nor diluted one drop of honey from its abundant hive...nor stayed its triumphant progress so much as one brief hour! It is still the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword And much more besides! --R. G. Lee

"Grace is a provision for men who are so fallen that they cannot lift the axe of justice, so corrupt that they cannot change their own natures, so averse to God that they cannot turn to Him, so blind that they cannot see Him, so deaf that they cannot hear Him, and so dead that He Himself must open their graves and lift them into resurrection."

- G. S. Bishop

"THE MAN WHO IS A TRUE CHRISTIAN IS A MAN WHO HAS HAD A GLIMPSE OF HELL, AND WHO KNOWS THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE REASON FOR THE FACT THAT HE IS NOT BOUND FOR IT."

- MARTYN LLOYD-JONES