

"Divine commands should guide us in the subject of our prayers. We cannot in our own strength keep God's statutes as He wants them kept, and yet we long to do so. What course of action do we have but prayer? We must ask the Lord to work our works in us, or we will never work out His commandments." - C. H. Spurgeon

BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 95. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances, especially the Word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation. (Rom. 10:17; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 3:5; Acts 14:1; 2:41,42)

Q. 96. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation. (Ps. 119:11,18; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Peter 2:1,2; Rom. 1:16; Ps. 19:7)

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Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

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 DOUBLE CURE

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Hebrews 10:14

My earliest memories include the well-known and oft sung hymn, Rock of Ages. I quickly learned the lyrics and the tune was, of course, instantly recognizable. What I, also remember is that I had no idea of the meaning of the words. Even through my teen years when I had learned what a cleft was, it still did not apply to me personally. It is for sure that the thought of a “double cure” just did not register. And, I did not learn such meanings until the Lord was pleased to reveal Himself in me. With the revelation of Christ to me and in me, those words became of monumental importance to me.

It is to be feared that many powerful and essential truths pass through the lips of people singing hymns of grace and faith without ever stopping off in either minds or hearts. On hearing the truth, one would think that at least a note of recognition would provoke some thought. On being told of something familiar one might remark “I knew that.” Or, on learning something of great importance that the thought would resonate to the idea of “I understand that.” Certainly, it is a matter of great joy when one can hear and learn of the grace of God and with old Newton proclaim it to be amazing.

It is traditionally reported that in 1763 Augustus Toplady was inspired to write this hymn by an incident that occurred as he was traveling in a gorge in the hills of England. While in the gorge he was reportedly caught in a terrible storm. He found shelter in a gap in the gorge and was thereby struck with the title and

quickly scribbled down the first lines. We might be reminded of Elijah in the cave while earthshaking events were taking place. Or, we might look even further back to the Lord placing Moses in the cleft of the rock while allowing him to see the hidden parts of the Glory of God. In any case, those who sense that we are only truly safe in Christ Jesus our Lord as we witness the storms of this present evil world, can fully identify with Toplady and that the Rock of Ages is the only Cleft for me. But, the thoughts of Toplady looked beyond the immediate situation of safety and rejoiced in that which secured for him divine protection and preservation.

On reading this text from Hebrews 10, the thought of Toplady’s great hymn came sweetly to my mind. While there are many texts that teach the truth of a “double cure” this one does so quite effectively with this writer. We, whose trust is in Christ alone, know that the wrath of God is very real and that He has, He does, and He will express it as it suits His purpose. There is also the realization that dwelling with God requires sameness with Him. And, He is majestically pure and that far beyond anything we can imagine. The true believer knows that he is deserving of the wrath of God and that he falls infinitely short of the purity that God requires for cohabitation with Him. Thus, my need is double. I must be saved from the wrath of God and I must attain to such purity as can be allowed in the presence of our Holy God.

What a Gospel witness this is. Perhaps it is because of these powerful declarations by these

spiritual giants of the past we find the reason for so much watering down of much (not all) contemporary religious music. They focus on thoughts that, in a very shallow way, enable the singer and the hearer to feel good about themselves. Many Christian professions so-called give little or no evidence that a sense of wrath deserved and unfitness for the presence of God exists. They rather "...after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers having itching ears."

To many the idea of offering is just some nice thing to do. Some may realize that the Old Testament offerings required the death of an animal. What depraved human nature will not allow is the thought that this should be happening to me. Even if it were imagined that one was able to go back in time and envision presenting the required sacrifice, it might well be imagined to be a convenient escape or even worse not to sacrifice at all. Certainly, the thought that things could be as terrible as that declared in the suffering and death of Christ would never come to mind. But when one is quickened by the Holy Spirit both the depth of sin and the deserved wrath come to mind. What we see in Christ is that the wrath of God would certainly have plunged me forever into hell poured out in full measure on Him. It was there

at Calvary that the first part of the double cure was made effectual to His own.

My mind staggers at the thought of being "perfected forever." It is delightful to read of such a word of assurance. I must believe the Word of God to be true. Yet, this second part of the "double cure" is assured as we read: *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 10:10.* And so it is that perfection is imparted to us in regeneration and the quest for a life that answers to the holiness of God is sought throughout our earthly lives.

The first awareness of a new nature in us is that the old nature is totally ruined and unfit for the presence of God. So, it is that we must have the righteousness of Christ imputed to our account to settle the debt. And, we must have the very nature of Christ imparted to us so that we may literally appear in His presence. Not only has the way been opened into the presence of God, we have been made pure by the washing of regeneration. We have been made partakers of the divine nature and have begun to enjoy eternity in the divine presence. All because Christ Jesus, our Rock of Ages has been made to be "of sin, the double cure." *bhs*

The Distinction Between Free Will and Free Agency

INABILITY: FALLEN HUMAN BEINGS ARE BOTH FREE AND ENSLAVED

BY J.I. PACKER

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? - JEREMIAH 17:9

Clear thought about the fallen human condition requires a distinction between what for the past two centuries has been called free agency and what since the start of Christianity has been called free will. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and others spoke of free will in two senses, the first trivial, the second important; but this was confusing, and it is better always to use free agency for their first sense.

Free agency is a mark of human beings as such. All humans are free agents in the sense that they make their own decisions as to what they will do, choosing as they

please in the light of their sense of right and wrong and the inclinations they feel. Thus they are moral agents, answerable to God and each other for their voluntary choices. So was Adam, both before and after he sinned; so are we now, and so are the glorified saints who are confirmed in grace in such a sense that they no longer have it in them to sin. Inability to sin will be one of the delights and glories of heaven, but it will not terminate anyone's humanness; glorified saints will still make choices in accordance with their nature, and those choices will not be any the less the product of human free agency just because they will always be good and right.

Free will, however, has been defined by Christian teachers from the second century on as the ability to choose all the moral options that a situation offers, and Augustine affirmed against Pelagius and most of the Greek Fathers that original sin has robbed us of free will in this sense. We have no natural ability to discern and choose God's way because we have no natural inclination Godward; our hearts are in bondage to sin, and only the grace of regeneration can free us from that slavery. This, for substance, was what Paul taught in Romans 6:16-23; only the freed will (Paul says, the freed person) freely and heartily chooses righteousness. A permanent love of righteousness—that is, an inclination of heart to the way of living that pleases God—is one aspect of the freedom that Christ gives (John 8:34-36; Gal. 5:1, 13).

It is worth observing that will is an abstraction. My will is not a part of me which I choose to move or not to move, like my hand or my foot; it is precisely me choosing to act and then going into action. The truth about free agency, and about Christ freeing sin's slave from sin's dominion, can be expressed more clearly if the word will is dropped and each person says: I am the morally responsible free agency; I am the slave of sin whom Christ must liberate; I am the fallen being who only have it in me to choose against God till God renews my heart.

The God of Peace
Romans 15:33

This seems to have been one of Paul's favorite names for God (2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Hebrews 13:20; Romans 16:20). What a good name for him it is — "The God of Peace!"

"The God of Peace" made peace between himself and his people by the blood of Christ. His thoughts toward us are "thoughts of peace" from everlasting (Jeremiah 29:11). He entered into a Covenant of Peace with Christ for us (Ezekiel 34:25; 37:26). And the Counsel of Peace is between them both (Zechariah 6:13).

Christ our Savior is the Prince of Peace and the Way of Peace. It pleased God to reconcile us to himself by punishing his own dear Son in our place (Colossians 1:20; Isaiah 53:4-11; Psalm 89:19-37). The chastisement of our peace was laid on him; and with his stripes we are healed.

It is God the Spirit who gives sinners, when born again by his grace, "peace in believing" (Romans 15:13), true and solid peace of conscience, the peace of God, "which passeth all understanding." —Don Fortner

PLEASURE, PROFIT, PREFERMENT ARE THE WORLDLING'S TRINITY – JOHN TRAPP