

God looks not at the elegancy of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly. The true mother would not have the child divided. As God loves a broken and a contrite heart. Thomas Brooks

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 V. What things are chiefly contained in the Holy Scriptures?

Answer. The Holy Scriptures chiefly contain what man is to believe concerning God, and what God requires of man.

Ecc. 12.13-14; Mic. 6.8; 2 Tim. 3.14-17.

Question VI. What is God?

Answer. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Ex. 34. 5-7; Jn. 4.24; 1 Tim. 1.17 & 6.15-16; Heb. 12.29; Rev. 22.13.

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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 CHRISTIAN’S GREAT GAIN

But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6

Often the worldly concept of biblical terms is far from the mark. “Godliness” is no exception. Man bases his thoughts on a greatly diminished concept of God. *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Psalms 50:21.* Because of this they neither understand the original relationship with God in the Garden nor the aim of God in redemption and restoration. The purpose of redemption has always been to restore us to a state of Godliness by enabling a right relationship with Him and so to bring glory to Himself. Where there is true Godliness, there will be recognition of complete sufficiency and the experience will grow and be perceived as “great gain.”

We would approach this text with three questions. First, what is Godliness? Second, what is contentment? And, the third, how is this combination of blessedness great gain? The fact that great gain is to be had should be enough to encourage true believers to pursue these questions and to desire the grace that produces such a way of life and profitability.

I have often tried to arrive at a definition for Godliness and felt that I came short. Perhaps this is because a right relationship with God is as infinite and intricate as the being and existence of God Himself. Such a relationship does not exist apart from the experience of “Christ in you the hope of glory.” Paul brought it to the level of the divine character in declaring that “Great is the mystery of Godliness” in reference to the

incarnation of Christ and all that follows. Such thoughts as practicing the presence of God have come to mind in the place of the self-righteous concept of outward moral compliance apart from the grace of God. That is what is often in view when one observes that another person is godly.

The ISBE defines it thusly: “Godliness, as denoting character and conduct determined by the principle of love or fear of God in the heart is the summing up of genuine religion. There can be no true religion without it: only a dead form (2 Timothy 3:5).” Godliness reflects the image of God as seen in Christ and brought to our nature by Him. It comes as a miraculous work of the Spirit in regeneration, and that new life is an evidence of it. We would understand that the bringing in of Godliness is a gracious work in which we are passive. But we would further understand that it is developed ever more fully in the life as one experiences the divine power and presence in our lives. This is understood in the words of our Lord in saying “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me...” Godliness is experientially developed in walking with Him: *Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos 3:3.* An exhortation is made to consistency in: *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, Ephesians 4:1.* And, a method is given us in: *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Galatians 5:16.* The evidences of Godliness are seen as the “fruit of the Spirit.” Godliness is

an identity with Him in the whole Gospel scheme.

We may see Godliness as the divine provision for a worthy walk and as the practice that arises from the presence of God in the heart. Contentment is a state of mind in which the things of God are seen to be both sufficient and the object of one's desires. The Easton Dictionary states it well in defining contentment as: "A state of mind in which one's desires are confined to his lot whatever it may be." Esau said to Jacob, "I have enough." But Esau did not have what he wanted. The distinction is to be made in "having what we want and wanting what we have." Biblical contentment is realized when one sees the sufficiency and worth of what he has but sees it also as the fulfilling of all desire. The songwriter said it well in the words: "All that thrills my soul is Jesus, He is more than life to me."

The value placed upon salvation by God is seen as we look to the cross and what was done there to save. We are given to place personal value on it as we see complete provision for the present time and the securing of a glorious future in His presence. Contentment is the embracing of all grace as the provision of infinite love and wisdom. According to Thayer, the word means "a mind contented with its lot."

The idea of gain here is not that of a one-time profit or a windfall. It is rather the means of obtaining something. Other words associated with this term are furnishing or procuring. So,

then Godliness and Contentment is the state wherein the means for obtaining true blessedness is provided. Such things as the "grace of life" by which we are conscious of the hand of God upon us in all things. "The Faith" is opened and applied to the securing of our minds. The implementation of faith (ability to believe) is greatly enhanced. True joy and excursions into true blessedness are experienced.

The greatest gain of all is an ever-expanding revelation of God in Christ. Men are given to think of earthly gain and profit in matters of no consequence. The believer has Christ and the provision of growth in His grace and knowledge. We are made to cry with the spouse of old: *My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. Song of Songs 2:16.* At every probing of faith we discover more of the unsearchable riches of Christ and His love. And, we are made the more aware that each discovery enables further joy. Godliness and contentment are great gain to their possessors.

Paul's prayers for the Ephesians (1:17-20 and 3:17-21) were for their ability to comprehend the blessedness of the power and love of Christ to them and in them and so to make them aware of the great gain they had in Christ. O that we might be moved to cultivate Godliness, find contentment and sufficiency in Christ, and experience the "Great Gain" ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. *bhs*

Friends, do not attempt to approach God in His unmediated glory. You can no more expect to approach God in your own righteousness than to approach 10,000 suns and not immediately turn to ash. No, you need a Mediator, and there is only one qualified for the job, Jesus Christ. He lived without sin so lives in unbroken fellowship with God, yet voluntarily absorbed God's wrath for all who trust in Him. So if you are in Christ you can approach God as an adopted child without fear of condemnation. --Monergism

The natural tendency of fallen man is to trust in one's own goodness for salvation. This religion of self-salvation or self-righteousness is the foundational principle of every false religion. -Monergism

THE BEST ANTIDOTE FOR SPIRITUAL HUNGER

The Christian faith, proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit, is the best antidote for the loss of spiritual hunger. Paul stresses four features of such preaching. (a) Biblical preaching of sound doctrine is expository in its content : “preach the word.” This grows out of the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16). We must expound and apply only the words and concepts of Scripture, because Scripture alone is the complete and infallible source of sound doctrine. (b) Biblical preaching of sound doctrine is earnest in its manner: “be urgent.” We must not present sound doctrine blandly. We must expound and apply it with animation and zeal. If we serve up good theology dispassionately, half asleep on our feet, in mumbled monotones, we ourselves are to blame for the resultant boredom and spiritual apathy. We shouldn’t wonder if God’s people gag on our doctrine if we serve it cold, and forget to cook it in the oven of experimental reality. (c) Biblical preaching of sound doctrine is pointed and bold in its address : “reprove, rebuke, exhort.” It comes from the heart to the heart. It uses great plainness of speech. We shouldn’t wonder why people sleep or daydream through our sermons, if our terminology sends archangels confused to their dictionaries, or if our structure exhausts men’s minds in a seemingly endless maze of words and thoughts. It also “meddles” boldly with specific sins. We shouldn’t wonder if men miss the point, if in cowardice we “leave the application to the Holy Spirit,” and only speak about sin in generalities so vague that even Sherlock Holmes couldn’t trace them to the offenders. Do not misunderstand. I do not condone hiding cowardly malice behind a pulpit and using sermons to snipe at brethren over personal offenses that love would address privately. I commend Peter’s courage at Pentecost (Acts 2:36-38), not violating Christ’s due process for resolving private offenses (Matt. 18:15-18). 108 2 Tim. 4:3-4: For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [didaskalia]; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. (d) Biblical preaching of sound doctrine is steadfast (“sticktuitive”) and systematic in its method: “with all longsuffering and teaching.” We shouldn’t think, “Why don’t you people get it; I said that once six years ago.” We must hammer the essentials of the faith over and over, until we drive the nails of truth deep into the souls of our people. A biblical ministry covers all the essentials of the faith, in an orderly manner, over a realistic period of time, to establish God’s people in the whole body of sound doctrine. –Greg Nichols *Lectures in Systematic Theology*

But we praise God above all for His new creation in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:17), of which we have become part through our new birth! We can never praise Him enough for His grace and loving kindness in giving His only begotten Son to be our Saviour. As the ever-growing wonders of our being ‘in Christ’ daily dawn upon us, so our praise of God increases. We praise Him for His grace in the provision of daily forgiveness, and we long to show forth His praise in grateful living. Fulfilling in some measure our present chief end, we anticipate with excitement the enjoyment of God for ever. –Derek Prine, *Created to Praise*