

"In Christ, God's nature becomes lovely to us, and ours to God; otherwise there is an utter enmity betwixt his pure and our impure nature. Christ hath made up the vast gulf between God and us. There is nothing more terrible to think on, than an absolute God out of Christ." - Richard Sibbes.

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 XLVIII. What is the third sense of sanctification?

Answer. The third sense of sanctification is the work of God's Spirit, whereby the elect are renewed after the image of God, which is called the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Rom. 12.2 & 15.16; Eph. 4.22-24 & 5.26-27; Col. 3.10; Tit 3.4-6.

Question XLIX. What law was Christ made under in His estate of humiliation?

Answer. The law of works.

Matt. 5.17-18; Rom. 5.19; Gal. 4.4-5.

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthjs@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM – In Richwood

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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WHY MEN STAY WITH CHRIST

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. John 6:67-69

The disciples had just witnessed something very distressing. They had been used to seeing the multitudes flock to Jesus for healing. They had, no doubt, sensed that men were affected in an unusual way when our Lord spoke. While they may not have always seen a full commitment to Him, His authority was recognized as He unfolded the Scripture and as He taught the things the Scripture had said He would. Now, although this crowd been fed from a few loaves and fishes they quickly rejected the “words of eternal life” and departed.

Having sensed their unbelief, He first discovered the place of disconnect. *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63.* These were not spiritual, and they did not possess life. Again, in detecting their resentment, He responded to their unbelief in such a way as to preclude any thought they might have of a willing rejection of Him. *And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. John 6:65.* This was the breaking point for them and for all who having heard the Gospel reject it. They would not abandon their pride and sense of self-determination and would retreat to their dead religion. They “... went back and walked no more with him.”

The remaining disciples were then pressed with what may have been a surprise question

from our Lord – “Will ye also go away?” He would engage them in such a way as to produce discovery of truth within themselves. A typical response to such a question might be of the sort that Peter had later as to self-avowed faithfulness. We know how that turned out – he denied the Lord. But the intent of the Lord was to bring from them that which was quickened in them by the Spirit. He would not just tell them – he would have them express it. He would have them to see the nature of a work of grace in their hearts so as to elicit a wonderful expression of truth revealed.

At this point they learned something very important about themselves. They could follow none but Jesus. They might have thought of following the crowd and giving them a more acceptable version of the words of Christ, but they didn’t. They could have pleaded with the Lord to go after the departing people, but they didn’t have time. The Lord’s question came immediately and that was not without purpose. He would have them to experience what they professed.

This question is one of the most searching in all the Bible in that the whole course of one’s life is defined. It is a question that we need to repeatedly answer as we would assess our identity with Christ our Lord. They had to search their hearts, but it could not be a lengthy quest. The answer needed to be at the ready and to be given without hesitation. If we must think long

about this there is serious reason for doubt. We are again reminded of the words of Peter: *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 1 Peter 3:15.*

It is a characteristic of true believers that they are “shut up” to the mercy of God. That is, they have despaired of any other recourse. When Peter responded, “To whom shall we go,” he was confessing that all other considerations had been completely abandoned. Religion had been shown up as a failure. They dared not trust their own wisdom or that of any other man. He was the only means of salvation. He had been introduced to them as the Lamb of God. This might have appealed to them as reason to stay, but others have heard the same message. It was a sense of identity with Him that made anything else to seem too far distant to warrant consideration.

The words of eternal life are characterized in the Gospel. Life is His to give and it is His life that is given. They had heard Him say: *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. John 5:21.* This is the good news. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He does so by qualifying them for cohabitation with Him and the Father. The words of eternal life describe the only acceptable sacrifice for sins and a cleansing from all unrighteousness. Furthermore, the words of eternal life tell of a

wonderful life-giving work done by the Holy Spirit in which dead sinners are made alive in order to hear those precious words. In that work the very nature of Christ is imparted to us and so are we eternally, preciously, and joyously bound to Him in that love which none can sever.

These words are matters of experienced necessity. These same men would be constrained by the love of Christ to confess: *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12.* Paul spoke of necessity with respect to his ministry. Here the words of eternal life speak of necessity unto eternal life. They could respond, “To whom shall we go,” because there was no other.

The bond between Christ and His people is such that they cannot go away because He has so ordered things so that they cannot go away. No separation is abundantly declared in Romans 8. Peter quickly acknowledged Him as the possessor of the “words of eternal life” (both as a decree and an attraction) and thus, was it was clear to him that Jesus was “that Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Believers cannot cease to be who they are – new creatures in Christ! We are what we are by the grace of God. Throughout the Word, believers are pictured as being bound to Him eternally and longing to know Him more. He will not let us go and, bound by love’s strong cord, we don’t want to go away. *bhs*

God in His immense essence is invisible unto our corporeal (i.e. physical) eyes, and will be so to eternity; as also incomprehensible unto our minds. For nothing can comprehend that which is infinite but what is itself infinite. Wherefore the blessed and blessed sight we shall have of God will be always ‘in the face of Jesus Christ’. Therein will that manifestation of the glory of God, in His infinite perfections and all their blessed operations, so shine into our souls, as shall immediately fill us with peace, rest and glory’ (Owen, I, p. 292, 293). –Cited by Derek Prime

From Paul David Tripp – *New Morning Mercies: A Dailey Gospel Devotional*

God calls you to believe and then works with zeal to craft you into a person who really does live by faith. I don't know how much you've thought about this, but faith isn't natural for you and me. Doubt is natural. Fear is natural. Living on the basis of your collected experience is natural. Pushing the current catalog of personal "what-ifs" through your mind before you go to sleep or when you wake up in the morning is natural. Living based on the thinking of your brain and your physical senses is natural. Envy the life of someone else and wondering why it isn't your life is natural. Wishing that you were more sovereign over people, situations, and locations than you will ever be is natural. Manipulating your way into personal control so you can guarantee that you will get what you think you need is natural. Looking horizontally for the peace that you will only ever find vertically is natural. Anxiously wishing for change in things that you have no ability to change is natural. Giving way to despondency, discouragement, depression, or despair is natural. Numbing yourself with busyness, material things, media, food, or some other substance is natural. Lowering your standards to deal with your disappointment is natural. But faith simply isn't natural to us. So, in grace, God grants us to believe. As Paul says in Ephesians 2:8, faith really is the gift of God. There is no more counterintuitive function to the average, sin-damaged human being than faith in God. Sure, we'll put our faith in a lot of things, but not in a God we cannot see or hear, who makes promises so grand they seem impossible to keep. God gives us the power to first believe, but he doesn't stop there. By grace he works in the situations, locations, and relationships of our everyday lives to craft, hammer, bend, and mold us into people who build life based on the radical belief that he really does exist and he really does reward those who seek him (Heb. 11:6). Next time you face the unexpected, a moment of difficulty you really don't want to go through, remember that such a moment doesn't picture a God who has forgotten you, but one who is near to you and doing in you a very good thing. He is rescuing you from thinking that you can live the life you were meant to live while relying on the inadequate resources of your wisdom, experience, righteousness, and strength; and he is transforming you into a person who lives a life shaped by radical God-centered faith. He is the ultimate craftsman, and we are his clay. He will not take us off his wheel until his fingers have molded us into those who really do believe and do not doubt.

Fundamentally, the factor that makes the difference is neither one's intelligence quotient, nor the number of books one has read nor the conferences, camps and seminars one has attended, but the quality of the fellowship with Christ that one maintains through life's vicissitudes. – J. I. Packer, *Rediscovering Holiness*.

WE MUST UNLEARN THE WAYS OF CREATURE CONFIDENCE AND CULTIVATE A CONSCIOUS DEPENDENCE UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF EVERY DUTY AND THE EXERCISE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN GRACE. –ALBERT MARTIN AND DAVID MURRAY