

Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die; another's life, another's death, I stake my whole eternity. - Horatius Bonar

“God is always working to bring human history to its appointed end. Nothing can thwart His eternal plan, not even unbelief.” - Steven Lawson

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 L. What is meant by the law of works?

Answer. The law of God, commonly called the moral law, chiefly contained in the ten commandments.

Ex. 20.1-17; Deut. 5.6-21.

Question LI. Which is the first commandment?

Answer. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

Ex. 20.2-3; Deut. 5.6-7.

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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 TREMBLING OF FELIX

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. Acts 24:25

There is no doubt that we are seeing in our Land that which was written by the prophet: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: Amos 8:11.* This may explain something that should be of grave concern to all true believers and Gospel preachers especially – indifference. Felix did not believe the Word of God but, he was not unmoved as it was presented to him by Paul. Felix was the Roman official who was holding Paul prisoner at the time. Something about Paul moved him to invite Paul to converse with him. Yet, many today, some who are professed Christians, appear to be relatively unaffected at the preaching of the Word. We are moved to ask, what made this powerful heathen governor tremble?

Webster’s 1829 dictionary gives the following as a first definition of trembling: “To shake involuntarily, as with fear, cold, or weakness; to quake; to quiver; to shiver; to shudder.” In application to what we witness with this man, two thoughts may be raised. The first is fear. The second is weakness. We might be so moved as to think of such fear that produces a sense of weakness. Thayer saw the word here as meaning that Felix was thrown into fear and was terrified. And we would seize upon the thought that it was involuntary – to be trembling is a miserable state.

Such a reaction is seldom witnessed in unbelievers today. In reading Edward’s *Sinners*

in the Hands of an Angry God we cannot help but be affected, as believers, by the reasonableness of the message and thus be moved to praise and thanksgiving for our salvation. In reading the account of the reaction of those who heard the message as to crying out from a sense of their sin, we are moved as well. Is it not distressing that such power is not being witnessed in our meetings today? Must we not pray for such visitations. Do we ever think of that from which we are delivered?

As a teenage driver I tended to have a sense of invulnerability. As I was driving one night at a dangerous speed, I hit a patch of ice which sent the car spinning out of control down the highway. In the providence of God, the car was righted, and I continued down the highway stirred but a little. A few miles later thoughts of what might have been crashed into my thoughts and I began to tremble so as to require me to pull off the road until I could safely drive again. How many ever think of what their eternity would be like but for the mercy and grace of God? And what is the effect when we do. Perhaps in answering that question we may understand why we are ignored. I believe that each time Paul related what occurred on the Damascus Road that he relived it.

The outcome with Felix was not good. We can only assume that, terrified as he was, that he never came to repentance. In many cases the outcome of hearing the same message was brought to bear by the Holy Spirit, life was

given, repentance and faith became way of life to them. The Apostle Paul is a prime example of one so affected. *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. Acts 9:6.* He was, no doubt, confronted with the same thoughts as Felix. Later, he would witness the same effect in others, notably: *Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Acts 16:29-30.*

We are not sure of the motive of Felix in sending for Paul. The scripture tells us that he had hoped to extort money from Paul. But the character of this man was well known. It seems his public character reflected anything but righteousness. Paul would have preached the righteousness of Christ as a necessity for acceptance with God, and he would not have been hesitant to do so in such a way as to contrast the wicked manner of this man. The Spirit empowering Paul knew well the heart of this man. As to temperance (self-control) he was known to be given to immorality of the worst sort. Again, Paul the prisoner had no fear to declare to this man that he would most certainly be called to account for his life of rebellion and wickedness. At this Felix trembled! In commenting on this David Brown (JFB) wrote: "and no wonder. For, on the testimony of

Tacitus, the Roman Annalist, he ruled with a mixture of cruelty, lust, and servility, and relying on the influence of his brother Pallas at court, he thought himself at liberty to commit every sort of crime with impunity. How noble the fidelity and courage which dared to treat of such topics in such a presence, and what withering power must have been in those appeals which made even a Felix to tremble." Others like him have trembled at hearing of the impending judgment of God: *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. 1 Kings 21:27.*

We have a mandate from the Word of God to tremble. *The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. Psalms 99:1.* O to have such a sense of the sovereignty, the holiness, and the majesty of God that we would tremble and so be drawn to Him to be quieted. We dare not presume. Consider, *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. James 2:19.* But we are encouraged as we read, *... but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. Isaiah 66:2.*

O that we might ever be renewed in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ and so find blessed quietness and calmness of soul. *bhs*

If you are troubled by your sin more, it is because you have more light, and the Lord has made you more sensitive to it. This is actually a sign that God united you to Himself in Christ, and a sign of a thriving Christian. For if God is with you, and He draws you closer to Himself, you will be more discomforted than ever in the presence of your own sin. This means the Spirit is doing His work in you.

The more a man grows in grace, the more he beholds the holiness of God's nature. And as he longs to have communion with God, the more he grieves that there should be anything found in him displeasing to His Majesty. This is one the central reasons God leaves us to our inner conflict as Christians, so that we may live and die trusting in God's free mercy found in the the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ alone.

--Monergism

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:14)

Now, this is amazing. Don't miss it. It could save you years of wasted living.

What this verse is saying is that if you want to become mature and understand and appreciate the more solid teachings of the word, then the rich, nutritional, precious milk of God's gospel promises must transform your moral senses — your spiritual mind — so that you can discern between good and evil.

Or, let me put it another way. Getting ready to feast on all God's word is not first an intellectual challenge; it is first a moral challenge. If you want to eat the solid food of the word, you must exercise your spiritual senses so as to develop a mind that discerns between good and evil. This is a moral challenge, not just intellectual.

The startling truth is that, if you stumble over understanding Melchizedek in Genesis and Hebrews, it may be because you watch questionable TV programs. If you stumble over the doctrine of election, it may be because you still use some shady business practices. If you stumble over the God-centered work of Christ on the cross, it may be because you love money and spend too much and give too little.

The pathway to maturity and to solid biblical food is not first becoming an intelligent person, but becoming an obedient person. What you do with alcohol and sex and money and leisure and food and computers, and the way you treat other people, has more to do with your capacity for solid food than where you go to school or what books you read.

This is so important because in our highly technological society we are prone to think that education — especially intellectual education — is the key to maturity. There are many Ph.D.'s who choke in their spiritual immaturity on the things of God. And there are many less-educated saints who are deeply mature and can feed with pleasure and profit on the deepest things of God's word. —John Piper (Contributed by Kelly Tyler).

Grant that I may feel more the strength of thy grace
In subduing the evil of my nature,
In loosing me from this present evil world,
In supporting me under the trials of life,
in enabling me to abide with thee in the valleys,
in exercising me to have a conscience void
of offence before Thee and before men.
In all my affairs may I distinguish between
duty and anxiety,
and may my character and not my
circumstances chiefly engage me.
from The Valley of Vision

NOTHING WE DO IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS HARDER THAN PRAYER. —MARTYN LLOYD-JONES