

"We are born spiritually blind, and cannot be restored without a miracle of grace ... No sinner ever comes to Christ until the Holy Spirit first comes to him! And no sinner will savingly believe on Christ until the Spirit has communicated faith to him."

- A. W. Pink, Studies on Saving Faith

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 LII. Which is the second commandment?

Answer. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

Ex. 20.4-6; Deut. 5.8-10.

Question LIII. Which is the third commandment?

Answer. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

Ex. 20.7; Dent 5.11.

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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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EVIDENCE OF THE NEW BIRTH

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. 1 John 2:29

“Ye must be born again!” These words have been faithfully preached down through the centuries for the simple reason that our Lord did not equivocate when He stated the essential truth to the Pharisee Nicodemus. It is enough that Jesus said it to believe it, to trust that it is so, and to look to its evidences as the only means of true assurance. We are not left to wonder as to what those evidences might be. In every place in scripture we find that those things demanded of us are only accomplished where spiritual life has been given.

It is to be carefully noted that our Lord offers no explanation, nor does He command Nicodemus to be born again. As the narrative continues in John 3, He reveals the source as the Holy Spirit then points to an illustration as to the effects of the wind as only to be seen. So, it is with the operations of the Holy Spirit that we may conclude that He, as the third member of the Godhead acts sovereignly while being fully in harmony with the Father and the Son. We soon come to understand that this marvelous work of grace, in making men new creatures in Christ, enables obedience and compliance in all that is required in receiving Christ and believing unto salvation. These are the things that pertain to life and Godliness.

It is now many years ago that as I walked past a Christian bookstore my attention was drawn to a book in the window by a popular evangelist. The title stunned me. It was *How to be Born Again*. Even at that early stage in my

Christian experience I knew that there was no method even suggested in scripture as to how one might contribute to his own new birth. The very picture made no sense. Had Jesus missed something in the use of a birth to describe the work of regeneration and conversion? Our Lord did not err and there is no contribution that one may make either to cause or assist in either his natural birth or his spiritual birth. We are only given evidences that a birth has occurred, and those things men claim as the reason of being born again are not causes; they are effects.

Many things believers cling to as pertaining to our salvation and our God are mysteries. The incarnation of Christ is one such. *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. 1 Timothy 3:16.* From creation to consummation there is much for which we have no explanation. We have the declaration of the Word of God. Yet, men will endeavor to explain what the Bible does not. The enemy has filled their minds with the notion that there must be some contribution made by them to bring about what only God can do. I often hear such statements as “if you will only put your trust in the Lord you will be born again.” This, of course, begs the question as to how can the unborn act in such a way as to enable being born. So, they would have us to believe that we are serving a god who is fully dependent on man to carry out

his will.

The evidences of the New Birth are given us in scripture, and it is by these assurances that we have hope and rejoice in the knowledge of God our Savior. John leaves us with these precious revelations in this epistle. We would simply look to these references and be tested and encouraged to look for confirmation of a work of grace in our hearts. And so, in our text we are immediately confronted with the essential reference to Christ and the knowledge that He is righteous. It is that righteousness to which we are awakened and to which we aspire. And, when that pursuit of the knowledge of Christ and the righteousness of Christ become our quest and way of life unto us, we have evidence that we are born of Him.

Ever careful to fully confirm and clinch the nail of truth in our hearts, John does so in writing, *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 1 John 3:9.* This is certainly not a reference to things done in the flesh. We are rather given to see that the cause of such a practice of life is the seed that remains in us – the divine nature imparted to us in the New Birth. There is no room left for the toleration of sin and so the practice of sin as a way of life is not an option.

A further reference to assurance is given in reference to the love of the brethren by which

we know that we have passed from death unto life. This is not just any life. It is the life of God in us whereby the love of Christ abides. His commandment was to love as He has loved us, and the evidence is powerful. The Spirit of truth and the spirit of error are identified in that “every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” 1 John 4:7.

Above all else, is that, *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 1 John 5:1.* We are commanded everywhere to repent and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Not as a figure of history; rather as the Lamb of God, the promised Son and the Lord of our lives. When that is our state, and when He is the One to whom we are fully submitted and to whom we are fully devoted we have precious assurance that it is all so because we have been born again.

It is by such faith that the world is overcome (v. 5:4) and that we not only cannot embrace sin as a way of life but also that the wicked one cannot touch us (v. 5:18). It is thereby that we may declare with John “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. We are never assured by the declaration of men, but because of the New Birth, sovereignly brought to pass, we may have blessed assurance indeed. *bhs*

I hope you can see and trace the connections. We must be born of God if we are to enter the kingdom: it is an indispensable necessity. But this new birth always results in faith and repentance, and we are never directly commanded to be born again (for that belongs to God) but rather urged by messengers of the gospel of peace to repent of our sins and to turn to God and His Christ in faith, and so obtain everlasting life. That is our experience of this change of heart. The question with us must not first be, “Am I elect?” or “Will I be born again?” but, as we hear the commands and invitations of the gospel, “Am I repenting of my sins and believing in God’s Son, Jesus the Christ?” for this is our known and felt experience of salvation.

--Jeremy Walker in *Life in Christ: Becoming and Being a Disciple of Christ.*

From John Bunyan in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*

I find to this day seven abominations in my heart: 1. Inclining to unbelief; 2. Suddenly to forget the love and mercy that Christ manifesteth; 3. A leaning to the works of the law; 4. Wanderings and coldness in prayer; 5. To forget to watch for that I pray for; 6. Apt to murmur because I have no more, and yet ready to abuse what I have; 7. I can do none of those things which God commands me, but my corruptions will thrust in themselves. When I would do good, evil is present with me.

These things I continually see and feel, and am afflicted and oppressed with, yet the wisdom of God doth order them for my good; 1. They make me abhor myself; 2. They keep me from trusting my heart; 3. They convince me of the insufficiency of all inherent righteousness; 4. They show me the necessity of flying to Jesus; 5. They press me to pray unto God; 6. They show me the need I have to watch and be sober; 7. And provoke me to pray unto God, through Christ, to help me, and carry me through this world.

GUARDED BY ANGELS -- After ministering for a few weeks in a foreign place experiencing partisan strife a few years ago, a high-ranking government official told me that I had been under police surveillance during that time.

I told him that I had not seen the policemen watching me.

He replied that I was not supposed to see them.

I asked him why they were watching me.

He replied that, upon my arrival in that place, he visited the local police station, identified and described me to them, told them where I was lodged, and directed them to ascertain that no evil befell me.

I was blessed by his report.

But I am infinitely more blessed by the report from a divinely-inspired psalmist that God has charged His angels to watch over me (Psalm 91:9-13): "Because you have made Jehovah, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot."

These guardian angels are, as were the earthly guardians over me, unseen.

But they are commissioned by the King of kings, a higher authority than even the highest earthly government official.

And, unlike earthly guardians, heavenly guardians never fail.

The foremost guardian angel is Jesus Christ, the uncreated and divine angel.

- Jesus Christ, as the Angel of Jehovah's Presence, loved and pitied His people, and therefore saves, redeems, bears and carries them (Isaiah 63:9).
- Jesus Christ, as the Angel of Jehovah, encamps all around those who worship Him and delivers them (Psalm 34:7).
- Jesus Christ, as Michael the archangel, stands watch over God's people and stands for them when troubles approach them (Daniel 12:1).

But note well that God's guardian angels are for only those who have fled to Him for refuge and who abide in Him.

Are you protected by Jesus Christ and His angels? Daniel E. Parks