

How did God bring creation into existence? Was it in such a manner that thereafter it would continue to exist of its own internal power? No. Likewise when God grants us faith, does he thereafter leave us to our own strength to continue in faith? No, like the creation, he preserves the faith of His saints or else their faith would fall into the nothingness from which it came. –John Hyndryx

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 LXI. Is man, in a state of nature, bound to obey this law?

Answer. Yes; and every act of disobedience deserves God's righteous wrath and indignation; for the law is holy, just and good.

Ezek. 18.4, 20; Matt. 5.19 & 22.37-40; Rom. 6.23 & 7.12; Heb. 2.2.

Question LXII. Wherein does disobedience to God's law consist?

Answer. Disobedience to God's law consists in sinful thoughts, words and works.

Deut. 27.26; Prov. 24. 9; Jer. 17.9; Matt. 12.36 & 15.18-20; Rom. 6.23; Gal. 3.10; I Jn. 3.4.

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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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A NEEDED PROVOCATION

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

There is a tendency to treat church attendance in a legalistic manner. This passage and others speak to the need of fellowship one with another and it is easy enough to relegate it to simple duty and therefore to want to enforce compliance. Like many other spiritual activities that are also waning, worldly distractions and misplaced priorities often interfere. We see the effect in such things as prayer, attendance to the Word, meditation, intercession and various other aspects of devotion to our God. Outward enforcement in any of these things has never been effectual; only a sensed spiritual need brings us to desire engagement with the Holy Spirit with the end that the things of Christ our Lord would occupy the place of preeminence in our hearts and lives. This is preciously promoted in the assembling of ourselves together with the purpose declared in this text. The thoughts here need to be addressed at a much higher level than mere obedience to duty.

We would consider the Hebrew-Christian context of this passage in that comparisons are being made of the old way with the excellency of that found in Christ our Lord. The old way involved such things as the continual coming to the place of sacrifice whereas we are directed to a way of confidence in that: *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Hebrews 10:14.* Armed with this knowledge, our faith proceeds to a way of confidence and assurance unattainable through

human endeavor. In verse 19 of this chapter, the writer even attributes boldness to our approach to God. Do we dare? See also: *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16.* Certainly this is not of self-confidence or self-worth (we have no grounds) but with the assurance of that obtained by the redeeming blood of our Savior and the fact that He bids us come.

Our text bids us to act in the behalf of others. To do so one must be assured for himself. The declaration is made that we have the boldness, but this is not the result of a mere fact. It is rather accompanied with new life – “a new and living way.” The letter bows to the informed experience of the true believer and thus we are led, in Christ, into the very presence of God. So, it is that with the “full assurance of faith” being regenerated and being made new creatures, we embrace the holiness of God with delight. We would, by his grace hold fast (as Jacob held to the Angel) to that profession of faith in the accomplishments of Christ our Lord – He is indeed faithful.

It is then with this personal confidence and the blessedness that comes with it that we would dare to so encourage others. It is first essential that we “consider one another” in every regard. We would know them as being of like passions and we would first see them as in need of such even as we ourselves. I have often

sensed and expressed the need to be strengthened in the faith through fellowship with the brethren and especially with my church family. Shame on me when I have felt critical or judgmental and must be reminded that "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." With a consciousness of what we have received by His grace and mercy we may well then desire, as did the writer the same awareness for one another.

Duty often speaks to us of servile obedience. Such terms as love, good works, and exhortation arise from a Spirit led desire for an enhanced experience in others. We often think of provocation in negative terms. Here the desire is to stir up an awareness of the love of Christ and the need to engage in those things that honor Him in the course of this life. Not only would we know the love for Christ, but also the exercise of the love of Christ toward others. O that I may be ever provoked in that way!

The word here for assembling only occurs one other time in the New Testament. *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 Thessalonians 2:1.* From this use we would understand that this is not just about the idea that you need to be in church. Our goal is to be gathered together with and unto Him and this should be the aim of church attendance. We are preciousy pointed to the approaching day of our Lord as an even greater reason to assemble. We are in practice for what will be the final event and "so shall we ever be with the Lord" – together.

There are some interesting and precious connotations with the word *exhort*. Thayer expands on the definition as including "to call to one's side." An extension of that thought is to comfort, to instruct, to encourage, and to strengthen. Any and all these thoughts would fit the context here. The thought seems to be that in coming together in the bonds of brotherly and sacrificial love that being together is in itself a form of encouragement and provocation unto love and good works. To be encouraged we would encourage others and so be reminded of our identity together with Christ Jesus our Lord. In assembling ourselves together we are able to make visible that which is an evidence of our regeneraton: *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 1 John 3:14.*

We tend to be concerned with how many are coming (whether many or few) when our concern is with who is coming. We desire increased attendance so that more may hear the word. But the assembling here speaks to spiritual union and communion with our Lord and with each other. We do well to note the aim in the writer's urging and that more than quantity is in view. And God forbid that I address the thought of provocation without first "considering one another." It is the glory of God we seek. That occurs when His people are provoking one another unto love and good works and encouraging each other with a view to His gathering us to Himself at last. *bhs*

PSALMS 133

BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT *IT IS* FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY! *IT IS* LIKE THE PRECIOUS OINTMENT UPON THE HEAD, THAT RAN DOWN UPON THE BEARD, *EVEN* AARON'S BEARD: THAT WENT DOWN TO THE SKIRTS OF HIS GARMENTS; AS THE DEW OF HERMON, *AND AS THE DEW* THAT DESCENDED UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF ZION: FOR THERE THE LORD COMMANDED THE BLESSING, *EVEN* LIFE FOR EVERMORE.

ON TRUSTING GOD

God's moral will as seen in the Bible is rational and reasonable, but the circumstances in which we must trust God often appear irrational and inexplicable. God's law is readily recognized as being good for us, but the circumstances of our lives frequently appear harmful and grim, perhaps even calamitous and tragic. Obeying God is worked out within well-defined boundaries of God's revealed will, while trusting God must be worked out in an arena with no boundaries, where we're always coping with the unknown.

Yet it's just as important to trust God as to obey Him. When we disobey God, we defy His authority and despise His holiness. And when we fail to trust Him, we doubt His sovereignty and question His goodness. In both cases, we cast aspersions upon His majesty and His character. God views both with equal seriousness. When the people of Israel were hungry, "they spoke against God, saying, 'Can God spread a table in the wilderness? . . . Can he also give bread or provide meat for his people?'" (Psalm 78:19-20). The next two verses tell us, "When the LORD heard, he was full of wrath . . . because they did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power." In order to trust God, we must always view our adverse circumstances through the eyes of faith, not of sense. --Jerry Bridges, *Thirty-one Days Toward Trusting God*

Eternity – Don Fortner

2 Corinthians 4:18

Eternity is a subject about which the wisest man can know only a little. It is a subject which we must approach with our Bibles in our hands. Let us seek to know what is written about eternity. What do the Scriptures say? Only those who recognize the sobering reality of eternity can live in a proper relation to the things of time. Let me give you four statements I picked up from an old writer, that will help you to live in the awareness of eternity.

1. We live in a world where all things are temporal and passing away. That man must be blind who cannot see this. Everything around us is decaying, dying, and coming to an end.

2. We are all going to a world where everything is eternal. The great unseen world that lies beyond the grave is eternal. Whether it is happy or miserable, joyful or sorrowful, it will never end. The bliss of heaven is eternal, and the torments of hell are eternal.

3. Our state in the unseen world of eternity depends on what we are in time. If we are the sons of God here, relying upon the merits of Christ as our only hope of salvation, we shall be the sons of God eternally, living in the glory of Christ. If we are the children of wrath here, despising the Son of God, trampling the blood of Christ under our feet, we shall be the children of wrath in hell forever, rejected by Christ.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Friend to whom we must turn for life and help, both for time and eternity. Jesus Christ alone can save your soul. Only his blood can wash away your sin. Only his righteousness can make you holy. Only his grace can present you faultless before the throne of glory. You must trust him now and live forever, or you will forever die. Take your mind off the things of time, and think for a while about the reality of eternity. How will it be with your soul in eternity?