

One way to get comfort is to plead the promise of God in prayer, show Him His handwriting; God is tender of His Word. --Thomas Manton

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 LXXV. What is meant by the gospel in a limited sense?

Answer. Glad tidings of great joy, or a free proclamation of rich mercy, without money and without price, to poor, sin-burdened sinners; with the glorious invitations, doctrines and promises of God's everlasting love, and the blessings these truths contain.

Isa. 55.1-3,6-7; Matt. 11.28-30; Luke 2.10-11,14 & 11.9-10; Jn. 1.16-17 & 3.14-17 & 7.37; Rom. 1.16 & 10.13; Tit. 3.4-7; Rev. 21.6 & 22.17.

Question LXXVI. What is meant by the gospel in a more extensive sense?

Answer. The above things, together with the precepts and ordinances enjoined on the church by Christ and His apostles, and the things connected therewith.

Matt. 28.18-20; Jn. 13.34 & 14.15; 1 Cor. 11.23-26; Eph. 2.8-10; Col. 2.6-7; Tit. 3.8-9; I Jn. 2.6; 2 Jn. 6.

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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 MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Peter 4:10

Most have a concept of the grace of God. To some it may be as simple as a recitation by a child at the table. Where a work of the Spirit is in evidence thoughts of grace bring to the mind and heart the wonders of the salvation that has come as a result of the will and work of another. “For by grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” To some, it is the divine favor whereby God has provided some assistance but with conditions attached. While the desperate have realize they neither had nor have anything to contribute. In many cases grace is not so amazing, even though they sing of it; if man plays an essential role the wonder disappears. The grace of God is not just the essential to bringing salvation to depraved sinners; it is the essential to the way of acceptance in every aspect of the believing life.

Peter begins here with a reference to the gift. Whatever is here referenced, salvation must precede it. There can be found nothing among men to recommend them unto the favor of God. That He should send His Son into the world to endure the rigors of this world, to suffer at the hands of men, to make His soul an offering for sin, and subject Him unto the death of the cross provokes in us thanksgiving for “His unspeakable gift.” The amazement in us continues as we are made to see what we were and from what we have been delivered. It intensifies as we consider the application of grace that enables a living relationship with God in Christ Jesus our Lord by the quickening power

of the Holy Spirit. It engenders “joy unspeakable” as we are given foretastes of that which is to come.

Peter here refers to the many aspects and functions of the grace of God. Later in the book he refers to it in this way: “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 1 Peter 5:10. It is implied by using the thought of “all grace” that an all-encompassing application of grace is intended here, and that God is sovereign in both the dispensing of it and its enablement. His desire was that the grace of God be the means of their maturity, their establishment, their ability to endure in the present world, and to know the peace of God as they wait upon Him.

In a similar manner Paul desired the accompanying grace of God for the saints at Corinth. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14. It was, perhaps, in view of the mandates given them that Paul invoked the “grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...” first.

In any event we must take care that we do not succumb to lesser concepts of the grace of God with such statements as “but for the grace of God there go I.” Such a statement shows contempt toward the person of another. Another statement that I have regretfully made is “I am just a sinner saved by grace.” Again,

there is a ring of truth but may easily give way to a less than glorious view of salvation.

What we do see here is a stewardship given us. We are not mere trophies placed on a shelf to be admired. We are servants with the nature of Christ Jesus our Lord imparted to us. We dare not compare ourselves with the likes of Paul and the other Apostles, but true grace is perceived by those about us. We consider what was seen in Paul by others: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship..." Galatians 2:9. Paul saw himself as being entrusted with the Gospel. 1 Thessalonians 2:4. And he credited the grace of God with both the power and favor whereby he preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ephesians 4:7-8. Where the grace and the graces of God are given, there will be care given to use them to the glory of the giver. Our Lord warned of the dangers of poor stewardship. By the grace of God, the ministrations of God are not just good — the word means excellent or beautiful. These things look good on the Lord's servants.

We are to give attention to the manner of ministration of the graces given us. We are to "so minister to one another." In writing to husbands and wives, Peter spoke of them as being "heirs together of the grace of life." The thought of such blessedness together is not lost

on us, but we might borrow from the thought and realize that the grace of life is sensed among all believers. So, we would have it to be seen and witnessed in the rigors of everyday life. It might well be applied to others in the fostering of comfort and assurance. It is that which will most be realized in sustaining one in the way of faith. As our thoughts mull over the benefits of grace in action, we sense that there is no limit. And we are preciously benefited in being good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Special gifts are identified in the Word of God. Where they exist, they are to be used. But all have the gift and possess things this world does not. It was given us in eternity. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Timothy 1:9. There is no such thing as a Christian with nothing to share or without ability to minister grace to others. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Ephesians 4:7.

According to Thayer, the word manifold can mean variegated or motley. It is a beautiful depiction of the many aspects of the grace of God. But it is the essence of Christ in all that makes it so. May we be reminded: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Corinthians 12:7. *Bhs*

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

"By the inner power and operation of the remaining light of reason in our souls, we can easily be persuaded that there is a God, and thus confess this truth in general terms. However, who God is, and what is the manner of His existence, no tongue or writings of any creature are able to teach us. This is a wisdom that is fully hidden from the wise and prudent of this world. Though they may greet each other with lofty and vain titles, none are capable of knowing God as He is except they who are pure in heart. They, and they alone, have seen God, and will see Him eternally (Matt. 5:8). The reason for this is to be found in the fact that we are all by nature practical atheists or God-deniers who do not know God and live entirely "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). In this state,

whatever we say about, think of, read about, and hear about God, we do as the Athenians did, namely, in regard to an unknown God. We are in such a state because not a single beam of His saving light and glory has ever illuminated our darkened understandings. Therefore, if we are to believe rightly that there is a God, and who He is, we must not turn either to philosophers or theologians, but rather, we must turn to God Himself and to Him who is His express image, Jesus Christ. It is He who is in the bosom of the Father, and He has come "to the Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:13). Therefore, either in heaven or on earth, there is no other way whereby we may become acquainted with God and perceive a glimmer of His glory except through Jesus Christ. The Holy Scriptures clearly teach this truth in John 1:18, where we read, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." In 2 Corinthians 4:6, we read, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

- Theodorus VanderGroe

"Every godly man is his own witness that the Lord's mercy, if it were granted only once, would be void and illusory, since each is quite aware throughout his life of the many infirmities that need God's mercy...there is pardon ever ready for their sins. Consequently, we must firmly believe that by God's generosity, mediated by Christ's merit, through the sanctification of the Spirit, sins have been and are daily pardoned to us who have been received and engrafted into the body of the church." - John Calvin Institutes, 4.1.21

True faith in Jesus shows itself in a real submission to and an open confession of His lordship, which deepens as the believer matures and grows stronger even in the most adverse of circumstances. The great evidence of salvation is that a person continues on to maturity in this same faith and confession. Commenting on Romans 10:9-10, the renowned Scottish Baptist Robert Haldane (1764-1842) writes: A man becomes righteous, perfectly righteous, through believing God's record concerning His Son. But the evidence that this faith is genuine is found in the open confession of the Lord with the mouth in everything in which His will is known. Confession of Christ is as necessary as faith in Him, but necessary for a different purpose. Faith is necessary to obtain the gift of righteousness. Confession is necessary to prove that this gift is received. If a man does not confess Christ at that hazard of life, character, property, liberty, and everything dear to him, he has not the faith of Christ. In saying, then, that confession is made unto salvation, the apostle does not mean that it is the cause of salvation, or that without it the title to salvation is incomplete. When a man believes in his heart, he is justified. But confession of Christ is the effect of faith, and will be evidence of it at the last day. Faith which interests the sinner in the righteousness of Christ is manifested by the confession of His name in the midst of enemies, or in the face of danger. -Paul Washer, *The Gospel and True Conversion*