

The storms of winter often bring out the defects in a man's house, and sickness often exposes the gracelessness of a man's soul. Surely anything that makes us find out the real character of our faith is good. —J.C. Ryle

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 CVIII. What will become of believers at their death?

Answer. The souls of believers, at their death, shall enter into immortal glory and be with Christ, which is far better; and their bodies shall rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Luke 16.22 & 23.43; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5.6-10; Phil. 1.23; 1 Thess. 4.13-18.

Question CIX. What will become of believers at the resurrection?

Answer. At the resurrection the bodies of believers shall be raised like unto the glorious body of Christ, their Head, and soul and body be for ever with the Lord in that eternal kingdom of felicity which God has prepared for them, where they shall see as they are seen, and know as they are known; and with one immortal tongue sing to the glory of rich, free and sovereign grace, for ever and ever. Amen.

Job 19.25-27; Psa. 17.15; Isa. 25.8 & 26.19; Dan. 12.2; Hos. 13.14; Jn. 5.28-29; 1 Cor. 13.12; 1 Cor. 15; Phil. 3.20-21; 1 Thess. 4.13-18; 1 Jn. 3.1-2; Rev. 5.13-14 & 7.9-17 & 14.1-5.

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsj@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

Volume 13, No. 28

July 12, 2020

HE THAT PROPHESES

But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. (1 Corinthians 14:3)

It is sad and alarming that there is a famine of the hearing of the Word of the Lord in our land today. The alarm is raised because of its source. Reading the Prophet Amos, we learn that “thus saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land.” The same causes that provoked the Lord in those days exist in our land today. Could it be? Many will complain that they just do not understand. Others are subjected to a “form of godliness” while denying the actual power of God. Seeing, hearing, and understanding the Word are gifts of God. However, the Gospel is to be preached to every creature and thus all men are accountable to such testimonies of God as are provided. The heavens declare Him.

Believing in the sovereignty of God, we may simply brush off the unresponsiveness to the message as being in God’s hands. Doing so serves to ease our conscience and we go on our merry way. Yet, we read of Paul speaking of travail in desiring to see Christ formed in the Galatians. In seeking to obtain the desire of our hearts it behooves us to use the plain language of the Apostle here and the Scripture in general to communicate the pure Word of God. This is what he meant in our text by the phrase “unto men.” It is not my intent to strain the context, but attention needs to be given to simplicity and clarity in the presentation of the Gospel. *And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:15)*

The issue here with the Corinthians was the use of the Spiritual gifts. It is evident that conflicts and abuses had arisen and that many had given way to pride in the use of these things. The comparison of speaking in a foreign language as compared to prophesying was made in order to establish the importance that understanding be enabled. The aim of the Gospel here was the edification of the church. Speaking in tongues edified the speaker. John MacArthur wrote, “Spiritual gifts are always for the benefit of others, never self.”

We may read and understand much about the prophets of the Old Testament. The typical thoughts concerning prophets and prophesying is centered on the prediction of future events. There is no doubt that such men were called of God and empowered by God to the tasks appointed them. Many truths were foretold by them long before they came to pass. At the same time, they were about the business of edifying, exhorting, and comforting. Often their words were of judgments to come. And, we read the history of many of those events being fulfilled. Are the New Testament prophets different from those Old Testament ones? Of them it was said that the Spirit of Christ was in them. Does the office still exist? There is no question that such were a gift to the early church. We note as well that differences are made between Apostles (that distinction is obvious), Evangelists, and Pastors. There may be no clear answer to these questions, but as to the aim of prophesying we can agree.

Paul names three distinct functions beginning with edification. "A prophet is one who speaks from God and for God, to his fellowmen." (Pulpit Comm.). "Thus, saith the Lord" is the authority upon which they speak. There is with them an understanding of the divine requirements for acceptance with God and so the character needed in the way of morality and the pursuit of Godliness. The righteousness of God as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord and Christ Himself is the foundation upon which men must be built up. So, it is the aim of the prophet (witness) to aim at both laying that foundation and building upon it that men may be established in the most Holy Faith. He brings the scriptures to bear on them simply and with the language of the common man.

I once heard my grandmother refer to a preacher she had known as an "exhorter." I was not exactly sure what she meant and did not ask. I think I do now. John Gill pointed to edification as the building up in Christ and to exhortation as encouraging "to the more vigorous exercise of Grace, and the more cheerful and fervent discharge of duty." Another has written, "It must never be forgotten that the communication of knowledge is not the whole of ministry; that religion is not altogether a matter of the intellect; that human life is not simply one long lesson. Man is so framed that he is bound to action, and that he needs inducements, directions, encouragement, with a view to such action as shall be acceptable to his Maker and Savior." The man my grandmother spoke of must have been one who pressed the

necessity of life well lived in the presence of God with a view to being a faithful servant of the Most High.

The third thing is that of applying the comfort of Christ, His mercy and grace, to the hearts of the tempted, the tried, the afflicted, and the anxious traveler. It is to deliver them to the way of assurance through the reminders of all that has been accomplished in the substitutionary work of our Blessed Lord. The fact that He suffered and so understands, and that His present intercessory work continues is consolation to the most downtrodden of us. Our High Priest is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and is able to whisper sweet peace to the troubled heart.

In this sense may we not all be prophets? The daughters of Philip certainly prophesied. It behooves us to know all that we can of His person and His work and to communicate the same to men. We are foretellers as well in that we preach and bear witness to His coming again. We may foretell and so warn of judgment to come. Felix the Roman clearly understood the words of Paul the Apostle and trembled at that Word.

As we think of Him who has "called us unto His eternal glory," and the importance He has placed on His message, may we be moved to see, to hear, and to communicate the message of mercy and grace with great care and concern for His honor and salvation of those to whom we speak. Salvation is of the Lord and we would have men to hear of Him and be precious affected. *bhs*

My Great Daily Challenge As a Christian

The great daily challenge I face in Christian living is not a challenge of knowledge—I know what I need to know in order to live in a way that pleases God. It is not a challenge of discernment—there is rarely any great difficulty in distinguishing truth from error and right from wrong. It is not a challenge of ability—there is no temptation I

cannot resist and no sin I cannot turn away from when I am indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. I have what I need to live well before God and man.

But so often I don't. So often I fail to live out God's two great commandments. So often I fail to love God with my whole heart and to love my neighbor as myself. Why? Why do I fail to live the way I want to live, the way God tells me to live, the way God enables and equips me to live? What is the great daily challenge?

The great daily challenge of Christian living is the challenge of simply taking hold of what is mine in Christ. It is the challenge of presenting my whole self as a living sacrifice to God, knowing that this is holy and acceptable to him, that it is an act of true worship. It is the challenge of not being conformed to this world, but of being transformed by the renewing of my mind so I can do the will of God—all that is good and acceptable and perfect.

The great daily challenge is, on the face of it, so very simple: to think like a Christian, to speak like a Christian, to act like a Christian. It is to think in ways that reflect a renewed mind, a mind that sees the world as it truly is and a mind that is determined to think God's thoughts after him. It is to speak in ways that reflect a renewed heart, to understand that life and death are in the power of the tongue and that my words can be fresh water or brackish, a blessing or a curse. It is to act in ways that reflect renewed desires, to act in ways that faithfully deploy my gifts, talents, time, energy, and enthusiasm for the good of others and the glory of God.

The great daily challenge is to earnestly desire to live in a distinctly Christian way. It is to pray that I actually would live in a distinctly Christian way. It is to pray "God, in the day ahead I pray that I will think like a Christian, that I will speak like a Christian, that I will act like a Christian." It is to trust that this is a prayer God is pleased to answer. —Tim Challies

Sovereign over Us

God's sovereignty as Creator extends not only over the creation around us, however, but also over us. Our souls, which often feel so fragile, are in the arms of Omnipotence. And no suffering can reach into those arms to snatch the people God protects.

"By God's power," Peter writes, "[you] are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5). In all afflictions, fears, sorrows, and uncertainties, the power of God is garrisoned about our souls, guarding and keeping us — not from the suffering itself, but from anything in the suffering that would ultimately destroy us. He is our Creator twice over — once by birth, twice by new birth (1 Peter 1:3, 23) — and he will not forsake the work of his hands.

Such is the power that undergirds the promise at the end of Peter's letter: "After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10). After we have suffered through the "little while" of this life, our Creator will bend down to the dust once again and put his breath back in to the children of man. Then paralyzed legs will walk again, blind eyes will see again, scarred skin will feel again. Then the pieces of every broken heart will be put back together; then will every wound, seen and unseen, be bound up for eternity.

Our Creator has every ability - indeed, every intention - to make all things new, and to place us in a world where suffering has no home. —Scott Hubbard, Editor *Desiring God*