

He never intended this world for our rest, and therefore never appointed us to take our ease in it. This travail is given to us to make us weary of the world and desirous of the remaining rest. — Matthew Henry

### The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 *(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

64. Q. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. Before the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-14); and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath (Ps. 118:24; Mt. 28:1; Mk. 2:27, 28; Jn. 20:19, 20, 26; Rev. 1:10; Mk. 16:2; Lk. 24:1, 30-36; Jn. 20:1; Acts 1:3; 2:1, 2; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2).

65. Q. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day (Ex. 20:8, 10), even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days (Ex. 16:25-28; Neh. 13:15-22); and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship (Lk. 4:16; Acts 20:7; Ps. 92:title; Is. 66:23), except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy (Mt. 12:1-13).

#### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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

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### FATHERS AND THE FATHER

*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. (1 John 2:13-14)*

As we witness the increase of overt wickedness in our land, we hear many explanations as to why it is so. Especially as concerns crime among our youth, one recurring observation is made. It is that there is a high percentage of homes in which there is no father. This is but one indicator of the absence of the knowledge of God. “God is not in all their thoughts.” It may be that God is not in any of their thoughts. The divine order, established from the beginning, is clearly held in contempt and the result is chaos and the increase of ungodliness. The importance of fatherly guidance is stressed in the Word by such passages as: *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)*. We who have had the correction of earthly fathers are blessed indeed. We that have known the love and correction of our Heavenly Father are blessed above measure.

The terms of endearment used by John in these epistles are especially exemplary and encouraging. His repeated reference to them as “little children” implies that he has embraced the role of being a father to them. Of course, we understand that in a spiritual sense. He includes all as being his little children. But then he addresses and challenges them as to their role in imitation both of him and of God our Father.

He does so at three levels of Christian experience: fathers, young men, and little children. He addresses the God-given ability of each at the place where they are with an encouragement to increase.

We are reminded of the words of our Lord: *And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. (Matthew 23:9)*. Of course, we understand that we are to look to none on earth in the same sense that we look to “Our Father who art in Heaven.” There are some who would claim that position. What we understand from John is that there are those who, by virtue of long experience with God and in the knowledge of God as the eternal Father, are encouraged to use that in communication and instruction of others. In addressing them as fathers several things are implied. One is that they have good understanding of the fatherhood of God in the sense that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They have a grip on the wonder of the eternal being and existence of God. That they have enjoyed the sense of themselves being the sons of God by virtue of adoption and are so considered in Christ. That they will act toward others in such a way as to portray the same love of God with which they were gathered unto Him. They will in all ways act in a fatherly manner toward those given into their care. Simon Kistemaker wrote:

"We have natural fathers, but earthly fatherhood is only a faint reflection of God's fatherhood. Nevertheless, John appeals to the fathers, because they have gained spiritual knowledge of and about Jesus Christ. In the course of time, they "have [come to know] him who is from the beginning." They have an intimate knowledge of God's revelation in Jesus Christ." The long experience of faithfulness to God and the Gospel qualifies them to be called fathers. Robert Hawker addressed this thought in this way: "The fathers John writes to are considered as having long known the Lord, and as such, long proved his faithfulness; and, therefore, can well speak of it, to his glory and the Church's comfort. The Lord (if we may so presume to speak,) delights to be known and acknowledged in his faithfulness. Deut. 7:9. And holy men of old, when a-dying, took pleasure to recount to the by-standers, of God's faithfulness and truth. We have beautiful instances to this amount in scripture record: Jacob; Gen 48:15."

We have multiple references to this aspect of God's revelation to us of Himself, and that especially in reference to His only begotten. Paul encourages us in a right approach to Him in such passages as, *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; (Ephesians 5:1)*. The Psalmist expressed the tenderness of the Lord in this way: *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. (Psalms 68:5)*. And in another Psalm, we read, *He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my*

*God, and the rock of my salvation. (Psalms 89:26)*. We even see the fatherhood of God reflected into the revelation of Christ to us in such prophecy as, *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)*. We find the ultimate example in the Father-Son relationship in redemption. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:3)*.

Paul used the same tender phrase in addressing the Galatians as they drifted into error. Paul, the father to them, addressed them as little children. *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (Galatians 4:19)*. O that we might be blessed the more with such wisdom that we older ones might act in like manner toward the younger and stronger. Such is the identity that we share in Christ our Lord. In speaking to Mary Magdalene on the morning of the resurrection, His words were, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to my God and your God."

The example to fathers, given us in His Word, can be no greater. May we be so reminded as we pray "Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name!" God has truly been a Father to we who love His appearing. The appeal of John was that those divinely given assets be exercised toward others even as He has toward us. *bhs*

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John MacArthur on 1 John 2:13-14 -- These very clear distinctions identify three stages of spiritual growth in God's family. Fathers, the most mature, have a deep knowledge of the eternal God. The pinnacle of spiritual maturity is to know God in His fullness (cf. Php 3:10). Young men are those who, while not yet having the mature experience of knowing God in the Word and through life, do know sound doctrine. They are strong against sin and error because they have His Word in them. Thus, they overcome the wiles of the devil, who makes havoc of children (cf. Eph 4:14). Since Satan's efforts are in falsehood and deception, they have overcome him. Little children are those who have only the basic awareness of God and need to grow. All are in God's family and manifest Christ's character at different levels.

MEEK AND LOWLY – from the book by Dane Ortlund

How does Jesus feel about his people amid all their sins and failures? This book takes readers into the depths of Christ's very heart—a heart of tender love drawn to sinners and sufferers.

God calls us to seek him, to call on him, and invites even the wicked to return to the Lord. [See Isaiah 55:6-8]. What will happen when we do this? God will “have compassion on” us (v. 7). The parallelism of Hebrew poetry then gives us another way of saying that God will exercise compassion toward us: “He will abundantly pardon” (v. 7). This is profound consolation for us as we find ourselves time and again wandering away from the Father, looking for soul calm anywhere but in his embrace and instruction. Returning to God in fresh contrition, however ashamed and disgusted with ourselves, he will not tepidly pardon. He will abundantly pardon. He does not merely accept us. He sweeps us up in his arms again.

#### New Eyes

But notice what the text then does. Verses 8 and 9 take us deeper into this compassion and abundant pardon. Verse 7 has told us what God does; verses 8 and 9 tell us who he is. Or to put it differently, God knows that even when we hear of his compassionate pardon, we latch on to that promise with a diminished view of the heart from which that compassionate pardon flows. This is why the Lord continues: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

What is God saying? He is telling us that we cannot view his expressions of his mercy with our old eyes. Our very view of God must change. What would we say to a seven-year-old who, upon being given a birthday gift by his loving father, immediately scrambled to reach for his piggy bank to try to pay his dad back? How painful to a father's heart. That child needs to change his very view of who his father is and what his father delights to do.

He does not merely accept us. He sweeps us up in his arms again.

The natural flow of the fallen human heart is toward reciprocity, tit-for-tat payback, equanimity, balancing of the scales. We are far more intractably law-ish than we realize. There is something healthy and glorious buried in that impulse, of course—made in God's own image, we desire order and fairness rather than chaos. But that impulse, like every part of us, has been diseased by the ruinous fall into sin.

Our capacity to apprehend the heart of God has gone into meltdown. We are left with an impoverished view of how he feels about his people, an impoverished view that (once more, due to sin) thinks it is in fact an expansive and accurate view of who he is—like a grandson who, shown a crisp one-hundred-dollar bill, concludes that his grandfather must be very wealthy, not knowing the billions in real estate of which that gift is just the tiniest reflection. So God tells us in plain terms how tiny our natural views of his heart are. His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways are not our ways.

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**ONLY HE WHO CAN SAY, 'THE LORD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY LIFE' CAN GO ON TO SAY, 'OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID?' –ALEXANDER MACLAREN**