

The Correct Reading

An atheist, who was also an invalid, sent his little daughter to live with friends who taught her to read. She proudly told her father when she came home, "I have learned to read." "Well," said he, "Let me hear you read that," pointing to a board at the foot of the bed on which he had printed in large letters, "God is nowhere." Carefully she spelled out the words in the way that seemed right to her, "God is now here." The unbelieving father was startled and perplexed, but God blessed that new reading to the salvation of his soul. *Copied*



KEACH'S CATECHISM – Benjamin Keach 1640 - 1704

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Q. 69. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

(Exodus 20:12)

Q. 70. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

(Lev. 19:32; 1 Peter 2:17; Rom. 13:1; Eph. 5:21-22; Eph. 6:1-5, 9; Col. 3:19-22; Rom. 12:10)

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

Volume 5, No. 33

August 12, 2012

TURNING UNTO THE LORD

Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. Hosea 14:2

The message to Israel in the Old Testament was often a call to returning and repentance. Such is the cry of the prophet in this passage. In summarizing the book Hosea charges that “thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.” Such was the charge made elsewhere: *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. Isaiah 59:2.* How easy it is to read these things and try to particularize the sins of Israel and not generalize them to apply to all. The issue here is of sin and departure from the Lord. The result is that the face of God is hidden. The direction here is clear. They (we) are to turn to the Lord. Religion is plentiful today. But, then, so is sin. To be away from the Lord is to be under the direction and control of sin.

Many will object to the idea of charging Christians with being sinful. They would rather define Christianity as being manifested with different levels of devotion. Yet, the Bible is clear in declaring that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Men tend to look at gross sin and overt sin and think themselves to be innocent of those horrible things. But, in the absence of faith and fellowship with God the subtle nature of sin is seen and we may be found to be more involved with sin that we think. So then, the exhortation to “turn to the Lord” may be the remedy to “little faith.”

It would seem that often the judgment of God is to leave men to themselves. The ultimate result is as devastating as if God implemented

some instantaneous conflagration on them. This is something the true believer cannot tolerate. He must have the presence of God. When one becomes aware of that sense of separation there is no relief short of being renewed in fellowship with Him. The passage often quoted in encouraging men to revival is: *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14.* We have a parallel here in that the directions are similar. Note that they are first encouraged to humility and prayer. Then the objective is revealed. “...and seek my face.” In so doing they are to turn from wicked ways. Man will be found either seeking the Lord or pursuing his own way and the way of man is always evil no matter how religious it may seem. Many seem to think that they can look both ways.

Augustus Toplady wrote well in his famous hymn: “nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.” The prophet is not suggesting here that we take something to appease the Lord or to somehow do something that only His grace can accomplish. Rather it is that we go with an awareness of need and a readiness to confess both sin and need. Such words are not the mere recitations that are designed of men to imitate true religion while neglecting the true issues of repentance and faith. Such words are to come from the heart and are directed to the Lord as

we turn to Him and away from all other hope. They are not words of promise declaring that we will do this or that. The words are rather a plea for mercy and deliverance from the things that have separated us from a productive consciousness of God.

The plea is to take away all iniquity. This is not a reference to the work of atonement done by Jesus Christ our Lord. The matter here is not of salvation but practice. Paul would confess that sin was present with him when he would endeavor to do good things. Such confession reveals an awareness that one is saved. The work of the Holy Spirit is to deliver us from the dominion of sin. Yet, there is only one conclusion that may be reached where the sense of union and communion with God in Christ is hindered. That is that sin is present in the conscience. So the desire is to take away such an effect by a refreshing of the grace of God in our hearts. We would have a renewed sense of being redeemed by the blood of Christ. We would have the fruit of the Spirit in evidence to us and to others. The taking away here desired occurs when the things of God displace

the things which have dulled us. The hymn writer C. A. Tindley wrote well, "Nothing between my soul and the Savior, So that His blessed face may be seen."

As indeed the Lord receives us graciously, we shall render the "calves of our lips." The writer of Hebrews seized on this thought thusly: *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. Hebrews 13:15.* When He receives us graciously we are preciously enabled to praise and give thanks with great delight. It is by Him that all things acceptable to Him are rendered up. There is no assertion here of paying the Lord back for His favors. Rather it is the reaction of men to the work of grace done in them and therein is God glorified. It is the "sweet savor of Christ" that pleases God. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10.* May we ever be offering up what He has provided: the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. *bhs*

"Of all the doctrines of the Bible, none is so offensive to human nature as the doctrine of God's Sovereignty." Man wants the control. He wants to be in charge of his own destiny. He hates to admit the fact that God is on the throne, and one day he will answer to Him, and even more than this, that he is powerless to prevent God's ultimate purpose being achieved. The idea is repugnant to "autonomous" man, governed, he thinks, by his own free will.

But in spite of this, the fact is that God is in charge. Man is not the center of the Universe, God is!"
J. C. Ryle

"The great truth is this — all that concerns the believer is in the hands of the Almighty God. "My times", these change and shift; but they change only in accordance with unchanging love, and they shift only according to the purpose of One with whom is no variableness nor shadow of a turning. "My times", that is to say, my ups and my downs, my health and my sickness, my poverty and my wealth — all those are in the hand of the Lord, who arranges and appoints according to his holy will the length of my days, and the darkness of my nights. Storms and calms vary the seasons at the divine appointment. Whether times are reviving or depressing remains with him who is Lord both of time and of eternity; and we are glad it is so." Charles Spurgeon

What Is the Glory of God?

The glory of God is the holiness of God put on display. That is, it is the infinite worth of God made manifest. Notice how Isaiah shifts from “holy” to “glory”: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (Isaiah 6:3). When the holiness of God fills the earth for people to see, it is called glory.

The basic meaning of holy is “separated” from the common. Thus, when you carry that definition all the way to the infinite “separation” of God from all that is common, the effect is to make him the infinite “one of a kind”—like the rarest and most perfect diamond in the world. Only there are no other diamond-gods. God’s uniqueness as the only God—his God-ness—makes him infinitely valuable, that is, holy.

The most common meaning for God’s glory in the Bible assumes that this infinite value has entered created experience. It has, as it were, shined. God’s glory is the radiance of his holiness. It is the out-streaming of his infinite value. And when it streams out, it is seen as beautiful and great. It has both infinite quality and infinite magnitude. So we may define the glory of God as the beauty and greatness of God’s manifold perfections.

I say “manifold perfections” because specific aspects of God’s being are said to have glory. For example: “the glory of his grace” (Ephesians 1:6) and “the glory of his might” (2 Thessalonians 1:9). God himself is glorious because he is the perfect unity of all his manifold and glorious perfections.

But this definition must be qualified. The Bible also speaks of God’s glory before it is revealed in creation. For example, Jesus prays, “Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” (John 17:5). So I would suggest a definition something like this: God’s glory is the outward radiance of the intrinsic beauty and greatness of his manifold perfections.

I am aware that words are poor pointers here. I have replaced one inadequate word with two others: glory with beauty and greatness. But we must try. God has revealed himself to us in words like “the glory of God.” And he does not want them to be meaningless.

We must constantly remind ourselves that we are speaking of a glory that is ultimately beyond created comparison. “The glory of God” is the way you designate the infinite beauty and the infinite greatness of the Person who was there before anything else was there. In other words, it is the beauty and the greatness that exists without origin, without comparison, without analogy, without being judged or assessed by any external criterion. It is the all-defining absolute original of greatness and beauty. All created greatness and beauty comes from it, and points to it, but does not comprehensively or adequately reproduce it.

“The glory of God” is a way of saying that there is objective, absolute reality to which all human admiration, wonder, awe, veneration, praise, honor, acclaim, and worship is pointing. We were made to find our deepest pleasure in admiring what is infinitely admirable, that is, the glory of God. The glory of God is not the psychological projection of human longing onto reality. On the contrary, inconsolable human longing is the evidence that we were made for God’s glory. John MacArthur