

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you — Though there seems evidently a climax here, expressive of more and more importunity, yet each of these terms used presents what we desire of God in a different light. We ask for what we wish; we seek for what we miss; we knock for that from which we feel ourselves shut out. Answering to this threefold representation is the triple assurance of success to our believing efforts. “But ah!” might some humble disciple say, “I cannot persuade myself that I have any interest with God.” To meet this, our Lord repeats the triple assurance He had just given, but in such a form as to silence every such complaint. JFB Commentary



GADSBY'S CATECHISM – William Gadsby about 1800

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

Question XIX. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

Answer. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created was their eating of the forbidden fruit.

Gen. 3.6-7.

Question XX. Did all mankind fall in Adam's transgression?

Answer. All mankind, descending from Adam by ordinary generation lay in his loins, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

1 Kin. 8.46; Ecc. 7.20; Rom. 3.9-19, 23 & 5.12, 19; 1 Cor. 15. 21-22.

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsi@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

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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COMMENDED LOVE

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

Men, in their foolish pride cling to the idea that they must make some contribution to salvation that is wrought in Christ alone. Yet, we discover that the essential elements of this great work of grace were so ordered that no claim to merit could be registered by those who receive it. In fact, most who truly know the Lord and His grace and mercy have no inclination to register such a claim. They know their salvation to be all of grace and see themselves as fit only for mercy. Their assurance of salvation comes as they are enabled to, by faith, see and embrace what was done for them when they were both helpless and unaware of their undone condition.

There is nothing greater in the lives of true believers than to know that they are loved of God. Many, however, would object to such a statement and counter with the idea that God loves everybody the same. To which, we would ask for such a declaration in the Word of God. What we do find is specific references to the manifestation and application of the love of God to those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Neither God nor His love is frustrated in implementing His design and purpose in salvation. We see the fulfilling of His designs in this passage.

We are familiar with the term commend. It is often associated with compliments, or acknowledgments with regard to some admirable quality or accomplishment. Here it is the love of God that is commended. That is, it is set forth and manifested with regard to the need of its objects and the actions involved in

bringing them to the desired state. First then, we would look at the prior condition of those to whom His love is commended. We read that we were sinners. Quite literally we were dead in trespasses and sins and as such were insensible to even the need of life. Thus, there was no response to those things that test for life. The breath of God was not there. The pain of sin was not felt. Decay was in place where there should have been growth. There was antagonism where there should have been submission and pride reigned in all things. It was to such His love was made manifest and there was nothing in them to respond to it.

If we think in terms of timing of the commending of God's love, Christ is declared to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In time He was sent forth to accomplish salvation and in order to do that it was necessary that He die for us. Again, I was not there. What was certain was that when I came to be born I would be a sinner. But, this was the commendation of God's love toward us that our salvation was purchased and certified and my consent was neither sought after nor needed. What folly it is to believe that God's eternal purpose and infinite provision could be rendered ineffective by the disapproval of the creature.

The commendation of His love continues in the next several verses. In verse 9, we are declared to be now justified by the blood of Christ. Those justified are declared innocent and are thus delivered from the punishment due

them for their sins. We note that the Apostle speaks in the past tense. The blood of Christ was the price of the justification of those to whom the Love of God was commended. So then, we are declared saved from the wrath to come. This is the same wrath that would be our due if not for the implementation of the love of God in our behalf. In verse 10, we are reminded that it was when we were enemies that we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. That is, the peace offering for us was accepted while we were yet sinners and before we were born. We note again, that we did nothing in bringing about this reconciliation. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." The commending of His love continues. In verse 10, we are also told that being reconciled we shall be saved by His life. "Ye must be born again." With the coming of the consciousness of life we realize that it is of His life that we are made partakers. It is God that works in us. The fruit of the Spirit answers to the need of a saved life. This is not about mere salvation from wrath, but it is a salvation unto an eternal existence with God in Christ. Furthermore, we are brought to

joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is much that is commended to us in the love of God. It is His in its initiation. It is His in its manifestation. It is His in its continuation. It will be all of Him in its consummation. There are no conditionals stated in this passage. No if's, no and's, and no but's. He has done it all and it was all done while we were yet sinners. It is complete as to time. It is eternal. It is comprehensive in its coverage. Every need is supplied. It is full in its fruition. All to whom the love of God is commended respond with the refrain "Worthy is the Lamb."

Could there be that where such love is commended that any should at last perish? Our Lord makes the presentation, "behold I and the children which thou has given me." And so, we do not hesitate to declare the absolute necessity of His Grace and mercy to all. Everyone that truly seeks will find. All that Father has given will come. The Spirit and the Bride say come. To all that do shall be found such love that was commended to them while they were yet sinners. We echo the call: "Repent ye and believe the Gospel. *bhs*

WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS

God's elect were sinners in Adam, in whom they were naturally and federally, as all mankind were; hence polluted and guilty; and so they are in their own persons whilst unregenerate: they are dead in sin, and live in it, commit it, are slaves unto it, and are under the power and dominion of it; and many of them are the chief and vilest of sinners; and such they were considered when Christ died for them: but are not God's people sinners after conversion? yes; but sin has not the dominion over them; their life is not a course of sinning, as before; and besides, they are openly justified and pardoned, as well as renewed, and sanctified, and live in newness of life; so that their characters now are taken, not from their worse, but better part. And that before conversion is particularly mentioned here, to illustrate the love of God to them, notwithstanding this their character and condition; and to show that the love of God to them was very early; it anteceded their conversion; it was before the death of Christ for them; yea, it was from everlasting: and also to express the freeness of it, and to make it appear, that it did not arise from any loveliness in them; or from any love in them to him; nor from any works of righteousness done by them, but from his own sovereign will and pleasure. John Gill

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace. (Galatians 1:15)

Ponder the conversion of Paul, the sovereignty of Christ, and what Paul's sins have to do with your salvation.

Paul said that God "set me apart before I was born," and then on the Damascus road "called me by his grace" (Galatians 1:15). This means that between Paul's birth and his call on the Damascus road he was an already-chosen but not-yet-called instrument of God (Acts 9:15; 22:14).

This means that Paul was beating and imprisoning and murdering Christians as a God-chosen, soon-to-be-made-Christian missionary.

As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 22:6-7)

There was no denying or escaping it. God had chosen him for this before he was born. And now he would take him. The word of Christ was sovereign. There was no negotiating.

Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do. (Acts 22:10)

Damascus was not Paul's final, free will yielding to Christ after decades of futile divine effort to save him. God had a time for choosing him (before he was born) and a time for calling him (on the Damascus road). Paul yielded when God called.

Therefore, the sins that God permitted between Paul's birth and his calling were part of the plan, since God could have done Damascus sooner.

Do we have any idea what the plan for those sins might have been? Yes. They were permitted for you and me — for all who fear that they might have sinned themselves out of grace. Here's the way Paul relates his sins to you.

Formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy . . . for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:13, 16)

O how sweet are the designs of God in the sovereign salvation of hardened sinners!
"God's Sovereignty: Paul's Conversion" John Piper



FROM KEPT FOR THE MASTER'S USE

A member of the Young Women's Christian Association wrote a few words on this subject, which, I think, will be welcome to many more than she expected them to reach:— 'May it not be a comfort to those of us who feel we have not the mental or spiritual power that others have, to notice that the living sacrifice mentioned in Rom. xii. 1 is our "bodies"? Of course, that includes the mental power, but does it not also include the loving, sympathizing glance, the kind, encouraging word, the ready errand for another, the work of our hands, opportunities for all of which come oftener in the day than for the mental power we are often tempted to envy? May we be enabled to offer willingly that which we have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.' --Frances Ridley Havergal