

You can never stop thinking about something by trying not to think about it. If you want to get something out of your mind, you must begin thinking about something else. —Heath Lambert

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)*

9. Q. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory (1 John 5:7; Mt. 28:19).

10. Q. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass (Eph. 1:4, 11; Rom. 9:22-23; Is. 46:10; Lam. 3:37).

11. Q. How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

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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 NECESSITY OF PERSEVERANCE

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. (Hebrews 3:14-15)

It was not long after my conversion and subsequent call to the Gospel ministry that I began to hear of something called “the carnal Christian theory.” That was in the mid-sixties and it was being pushed by many and welcomed by many more. The thought was that it was possible to be truly born again of the Spirit of God and either persist in a manner of life more consistent with that of the world or to return to such a way with no apparent consequence. Some talked of only losing rewards. It should appear that the terms used are contradictory. Christian means “Christ like” and carnal means “of the world.” Our Lord declared that His Kingdom was not of this world. While I have not heard the theory expressed as such for quite some time, the effects of it persist to the degree that many are being led to empty professions of faith and given assurance based on the same. The danger to the unconverted is obvious in that many are, no doubt, deceived into believing themselves saved and continue with either superficial experience or no experience at all consistent with the affirmations of true faith found in the Word of God. But there is a further effect that is to be noted in that true believers may be encouraged to become less intent on making “their calling and election sure.”

Throughout the Scripture we find the testimony of believers as to their desire toward Christ. Such directives as “Draw nigh to God,” and the determination, “Thy face will I seek,” and the need to “prove all things and hold fast

that which is good” are things neglected where there is any element of presumption and the effect is soon noticed by such persons and those about them. Is it any wonder that David prayed “Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sin?” We would note that twice in this passage the conditional “if” is attached to that which men are given to take for granted. In v. 6 we are said to be Christ’s house “if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” In our text we are described as being “partakers of Christ” with the same insistence of perseverance. So, it follows that we are given no place to be comfortable with laxity or indifference to the things pertaining to a life of Godliness. Assurance is not to be found in a profession or a creed; it is that confidence given us as we are partakers of Christ. Ours is an experienced assurance.

The thought of being “partakers of Christ” may be considered in several ways, not the least of which is that we are/were “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.” Thus, partaking of Christ entails a sense of being loved. Jude encourages us to “keep ourselves in the love of Christ.” We are further made acutely aware of new life from above and the radical transformation that occurs in our perspective. Old things are passed away and all things become new. Perhaps of greatest importance is the fact of union and communion with Christ our Lord. Union speaks to us of the fact that we are made one with and are vitally joined to Him.

(The vine and the branches). Communion speaks of interaction and devoted communication. The result of such manifestation of life in us (suggested by Dr. Gill) are the graces and good that come our way in every aspect of our life with Him. There is honor and dignity in association with Him. We enjoy the realization of justification and freedom from condemnation in both fact (salvation is of the Lord) and forgiveness realized. We are secured in Christ and true faith claims it as a matter of substance. There is strength found to both experience and to pursue true holiness of life. Fruitfulness manifests the presence of life. Perseverance is found along with true happiness of both soul and body. And we are co-heirs with Christ.

It is evident that the divine design was that partaking be the way. Christ did just exactly that with us. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (Hebrews 2:14).* This is full identity in order to experience our lot. How marvelous that we are made to so be identified with Him. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1 Corinthians 1:30).* We are “partakers of the divine nature.” We were identified with Him in His death and we must be identified with Him in life eternal – “partakers of Christ.”

“Ifs” are troubling to many in that they seem to speak of doubt. But again, we are reminded that there is no place for presumption in the

reign of grace. Those who would approach the things of God in a careless manner can have no true confidence in what they claim. The “if” here describes the eternal nature of that which we possess in Christ. It is not about what we do. The blessings of the Lord are not conditional; conditions are expressive of blessedness. Paul expressed a similar thought to the Corinthians: *By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:2).* The fear is that failure to remain true to the life of faith and the pursuit of holiness would indicate that there was no salvation at all. Many speak of holding out faithful to the end with the thought of what they are doing. In fact, those who truly know the Lord and the confidence of true faith will cling fast to those things as a way of life. Their assurance is living. *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12).*

Our depraved nature is hardened and progresses in its hardness. We are warned by the example of those who fell in the wilderness. John Owen wrote that “All sin comes under two headings – unbelief and immorality.” We are under a constant assault to follow that old way and so to distract from partaking in Christ. It is essential that we be not hardened and that our confidence be held steadfast until the end; not in order to be saved but to manifest the wonders of His grace and mercy to us and in us. It is because we are partakers of Christ. Holding fast is assurance. *bhs*

“GOOD WORKS”

Paul the apostle tells the saved in Ephesians 2:8-10 “by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Let us here learn two lessons regarding “good works”.

First, salvation is not obtained by “good works”. For salvation is by God’s unmerited favor alone. Elsewhere we read “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5). Therefore, saved people do not boast of any work they performed in order to be saved.

Second, salvation is indeed evidenced by “good works”. God predestined the good works of the saved before the foundation of the world. He then created the saved in their Savior in order for them to perform their predestined good works and to walk in them.

God furthermore gives to His people so much grace that they “have an abundance for every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

And He promises them that He will “make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:21).

We therefore should not be surprised that Holy Scriptures say much about the Christian’s “good works”.

All God’s people are to be “zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14), “ready for every good work” (Titus 3:1), “prepared for every good work” (2 Timothy 2:21), and “fruitful in every good work” (Colossians 1:10).

And we are to “maintain good works” (Titus 3:8, 14) and “stir up ... good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

We will, through our knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, be “thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16f).

“Women professing godliness” are known for their “good works” (1 Timothy 2:10). For example, Tabitha, known also as Dorcas, was commended as a woman “full of good works” (Acts 9:36). And when a certain unnamed woman anointed Jesus’ head with costly fragrant oil of spikenard, He said, “She has done a good work for Me. ... Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” (Mark 14:3-9 / Matthew 26:6-13).

Wealthy Christians are exhorted to “be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:19f).

Christ’s ministers are to be “a pattern for good works” (Titus 2:7f).

Our Savior exhorts us to “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

When you do a good work, realize that “it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Therefore, do not boast of what you have done for God. Rather, be like God’s ministers when “they reported all that God had done with them” (Acts 14:27; cp. 15:4, 12; 21:19).

Finally, let us not be found among those who “profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work” (Titus 1:16). – Daniel E. Parks

TO DIVORCE FORGIVENESS OF SINS FROM THE ACTUAL LIVING OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, IS NOTHING BUT RANK HERESY! – MARTYŃ LLOYD JONES