

"Adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." Titus 2:10. Let us take great care to conform our lives to our doctrine. Doctrine and duty cannot be separated. Every truth discovered in the Word of God ought to be applied to our lives. If our character and conduct does not reflect the grace and glory of God revealed in the gospel, our doctrine is utterly meaningless! -- Don Fortner

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)*

32. Q. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us (John 1:11,12) by his Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5,6).

33. Q. How doth the spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us (Eph. 1:13, 14; John 6:37, 39; Eph. 2:8), and thereby uniting us to Christ, in our effectual calling (Eph. 3:17; 1 Cor. 1:9).

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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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BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

The thought expressed in this passage is foreign to the minds of many in that they see no need of reconciliation with God. Many in this world toss the name of God around in the context of their own ideas which are patently in conflict with the word of the God they would advocate. It is not unusual for a politician to declare, “may God bless America” right after he or she has advocated contempt for a political enemy or has set forth the defense of some practice that is contrary to the precepts clearly taught in scripture. Our Lord taught us to love our enemies, not to “cancel” them. The mandate to those who would hear is “be ye holy for I am holy.” What is quite apparent in our society today is that many seem to think that God is tolerating their sinful behaviors and that He is just hanging around to bless them should they need Him. What is clearly not seen is that the “...carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” The idea that God is tolerant of such people is unthinkable, let alone the idea that He should be walking in harmony with them.

The mandate here is to “be” reconciled to God; it is not to merely get yourself reconciled to God. Paul is insisting upon a state of existence (being) that is essential to acceptance with God and admits to fellowship with Him and His Son. Paul declared an essential truth that precedes this mandate: *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of*

reconciliation; (2 Corinthians 5:18). It is in a very shallow fashion that men often claim the benefits of salvation without seeing the means God employed to bring them about. Some think of God's benevolence in an unqualified manner. Others believe that God responds to something in men. The depravity of man leaves him without hope except that God graciously acts on his behalf. So, it is declared that all things (provisions and all else) are of God and it is He “Who has reconciled us to Himself.” We are reminded then of: *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (Romans 3:25).* See also: Colossians 1:20 (through the blood of His cross), and 1 John 2:2 (He is the propitiation for our sins). Propitiation is that which takes away the wrath of God and enables Him to be gracious to offenders.

The ministry of reconciliation is the preaching of the Gospel of Peace and it is declared that Christ has accomplished it through His life, His death, and His resurrection. It is to us, who know Him, to publish the fact of peace only through the blood of Christ. Certainly, this was the ministry given first to the Apostles and in that sense, they were the special ambassadors for Christ. But the message is the same for all ages.

Further detail was provided by the Apostle as well as a further word of commitment in the preceding verse to our text: *To wit, that God*

was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19). The words "To wit" simply mean that this is "how that" it was done. Reconciling involves changing from condemnation to justification. The thought that God was "in Christ" might be simply explained by the dual nature of our Lord. Some advance the idea that the meaning here is that it was "by Christ" that salvation was accomplished. The fact that the "fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily settles the idea of God in Christ, while the fact was that it was the work of Christ that was accepted on the behalf of believers confirms the second idea. It is both. It is important that we note that the purpose of God had always been such a reconciliation. He is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It is through the "non-imputation" of sins that is the means of reconciliation. The application is particular -- as in John 3:16. The world loves to apply this as the universal love of God while it is specifically said that the aim of God was that believers should not perish; they should rather be reconciled unto God. We see the process later in the chapter in that "He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (v. 21). Paul again defines the Gospel ministry as "the ministry of reconciliation."

Thus, there is a mandate to be reconciled. Again, it is not to get yourself reconciled; it is to

be in that way of existence where we dwell as in the presence of God, being fully accepted of Him, and being in full harmony with Him, His righteousness, and fully identified with Jesus Christ our Lord. I heard it said many years ago, "You are what you need to be." That is, you are the light of the world, the salt of the earth, and you are reconciled unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are indwelt by Him who is the Word of God. The thought of "in Christ's stead" is not taking His place; it is rather that we be faithful to repeat what He has said and that we would have our words recognized as from Him and not of ourselves.

We would declare this message without exception to all. Just as surely as men are commanded to repent, they are to be reconciled to God. But the special application here was to the Corinthians and so to all true believers. The demand here is for us to "be" what God has graciously made us to be in Christ. It is to be evidenced in our approach to Him and in our testimony before the world. We are to act as "reconciled ones" claiming the promise, believing His word as a way of life, and being exercised in the practice of eternal life. This is not a proposal, or an offer; it is rather a commandment to all who truly hear. It is the precious word that we have peace with God and may experience being reconciled to God based on Christ, who is our peace. "Be ye reconciled to God!" *bhs*

It profits us nothing! (Arthur Pink)

"Though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge . . . and have not love, I am nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:2

We must distinguish between things that differ, namely, a knowledge of spiritual things--and actual spiritual knowledge.

A knowledge of spiritual things can be acquired by the unregenerate. Spiritual knowledge is peculiar to the children of God.

A knowledge of spiritual things is merely intellectual and theoretical.
Spiritual knowledge is vital and effectual.

One may take up "Bible study" in the same way as another would the study of philosophy or science. He may pursue it diligently and enthusiastically. He may obtain a familiarity of the letter of Scripture and a proficiency in understanding its terms, far in advance of the hard-working Christian who has less leisure and less natural ability.

Yet what is such knowledge worth, if it . . .
does not affect the heart,
fails to transform the character and
make the daily walk pleasing to God!

Unless our "Bible study" is conforming us, both inwardly and outwardly, to the image of Christ--it profits us nothing!

When Jesus Brags About You

Jesus promises that "everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven." As I continue my dabbling in nineteenth century devotional writers, I came across a neat passage from Charles Ebert Orr in which he imagines how Jesus may do that very thing. I share it in the hope you'll find it encouraging.

Jesus will gather his holy angels before him and address them thus: "Do you behold Brother—? He is a pilgrim and stranger down there in the earth. He is my child. I have washed him in my blood and clothed him with the beautiful garments of salvation. His heart is pure and full of love. He is dead to sin and the world. He loves my will, and his daily meat and drink is to do it. He loves my Word and has hid it in his heart. He keeps all my commandments. He seeks my glory. He often communes with me. He is fervent in spirit and zealous in good works. His good deeds and prayers I bottle up here in heaven, See that beautiful mansion yonder with its gates of gold and walls of jasper, its floors of transparent glass, its corridors of chalcedony, and colonades of topaz and beryl. That mansion is to be his home when his pilgrimage in that under-world is done. By his holy walk and devoted life he is now confessing me before men, and I take great delight in telling you that he is my child and in confessing him before you and my Father on his throne. Just as I have said in my Word, he that will confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father and the holy angels."

--Tim Challies

Shall my will be regarded more than God's? "O under, under! Get you under, O soul! Keep under! Keep low! Keep under God's feet! You are under God's feet, and keep under His feet! Keep under the authority of God, the majesty of God, the sovereignty of God, the power that God has over you!" - Jeremiah Burroughs

NOTHING TEACHES US ABOUT THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE CREATOR AS MUCH AS WHEN WE LEARN THE EMPTINESS OF EVERYTHING ELSE. —CHARLES SPURGEON