

John Newton: "A daily portion of both comforts and crosses, each one the most suitable to our case--is adjusted and appointed by the hand which was once nailed to the cross for us!"

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)*

93. Q. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, baptism, the Lord's supper, and prayer; all which means are made effectual to the elect for salvation (Mt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:42, 46, 47).

94. Q. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation (Neh. 8:8; Acts 26:18; Ps. 19:8; Acts 20:32; Rom. 1: 15, 16, 10: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 15:4; 1 Cor. 14:24, 25; 2 Tim. 3:15, 16, 17;).

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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 END OF ALL THINGS

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:7-8)

We are often greatly encouraged as we heed the thoughts of Paul to be “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).” I once heard a wise man say that “the Blessed hope is not an event; it is a person.” The words following in Titus clearly identify that person as our redeemer with a declared aim for those He would save. Over the years I have witnessed much that is counter to what is expressed there. It seems the many have an insatiable appetite for knowing the future and so engage in endless speculations as to future events. The tendency has been to become so fixated and sure on what they believe will occur that truth and the Gospel are considered secondary issues. Many have so intensified these thoughts as to make them a test of fellowship and caused them to label any departure from their own beliefs as heresy. How sad that our Lord said at His ascension that “It is not given unto you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power;” and men persist in this way.

It should arrest the attention of us all that in making this statement Peter elevates the practice of the love of the brethren “above all things” as we consider it. We often humbly confess that we love the Lord because He first loved us. It only follows that we love the brethren for the same reason. This is especially driven home by the connection of the love of

the brethren to regeneration (1 John 3:14). In His parting words to the Apostles Jesus laid great emphasis upon the love of the brethren and cited the example of how He had loved them. In that the love of God to us is the basis of our salvation, it only follows that the practice should be foremost as we look for Him. Paul made a similar connection to the Romans. *And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (Romans 13:11).* In verses 8 and 10 preceding he incorporates love as a factor to consider.

It is needful at this point to establish that Peter is referring to more than the second coming of our Lord. It is certainly not excluded but there is greater significance to what is said. His thoughts point as much to the accomplishment of all things as much as a termination of something. John MacArthur wrote on this the following: “The Greek word for “end” is never used in the NT as a chronological end, as if something simply stops. Instead, the word means a consummation, a goal achieved, a result attained, or a realization. Having emphasized triumphant suffering through death, Peter here begins to emphasize triumphant suffering through the second coming of Christ (cf. 1Pe 1:3; 1Pe 2:12), which is the goal of all things. He is calling believers to live obediently and expectantly in the light of Christ's return.” Thus, we are to be much

concerned with attaining to the holiness to which we are called and to the manifestation of the hope that is within us as we look for the consummation of the redeeming purpose of God. That we are partakers of the divine nature will cause a growth in Christian character, especially in the expression of love among ourselves.

Love among ourselves is the third thing Peter enjoins here. While it is elevated above the others, they are nevertheless of great importance to us. To be sober is to be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray (BNT). This is the wakefulness of which Paul spoke in Romans 13:11 cited above. While the imminent return of Christ is often the subject of fascination, we should be more concerned with the immediate presence of our Lord and the fact that it is He who will appear. It is well to be reminded often of His words: *Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. (Luke 12:37-38)*. The writer of Hebrews directs that we should be “exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” With James it was that we “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” We pay special attention to John as he writes: “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” MacArthur commented here as

follows: “To “be serious” here implies not to be swept away by emotions or passions, thus maintaining a proper eternal perspective on life. The doctrine of the imminent return of Christ should not turn the Christian into a zealous fanatic who does nothing but wait for it to occur. Instead, it should lead the believer into a watchful pursuit of holiness. Moreover, a watchful attitude creates a pilgrim mentality (1Pe 2:11).

So, it is that we are to watch unto prayer. We are to be on guard that our prayers be not hindered. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (Luke 21:36)*. We would be constantly and expectantly at the Throne of Grace.

The love that crowns our expectations has a further objective. It “covers a multitude of sins.” Of course, we understand that only the blood of Christ can atone for sin. Peter quotes from Proverbs 10:12 in asserting that fervent love enables us to be forgiving of the sins of others. Christ died for our sins; should we not at least be forgiving of others. If we cannot forgive, we may not be forgiven.

Even as we consider that the end of all things is at hand, we discover that the greatest assurances come in the imitation of Christ our Lord. Paul reminded the Thessalonians thusly, “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.” I would echo the thoughts of Peter who wrote, “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous...” *bhs*

The great antidote to anxiety is to come to God in prayer. We are to pray about everything. Nothing is too big for Him to handle, and nothing is too small to escape His attention. —Jerry Bridges

Watch For God

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me - Hab 2:1

There is no waiting on God for help, and there is no help from God, without watchful expectation on our part. If we ever fail to receive strength and defense from Him, it is because we are not on the outlook for it. Many a proffered succour from heaven goes past us, because we are not standing on our watch-tower to catch the far-off indications of its approach, and to fling open the gates of our heart for its entrance. He whose expectation does not lead him to be on the alert for its coming will get but little. Watch for God in the events of your life.

The old homely proverb says: "They that watch for Providence will never want a providence to watch for," and you may turn it the other way and say, "They that do not watch for providences will never have a providence to watch for." Unless you put out your water-jars when it rains you will catch no water.

We want to be more business-like and use common sense with God in pleading promises. If you were to go to one of the banks, and see a man go in and out and lay a piece of paper on the table, and take it up again and nothing more—if he did that several times a day, I think there would soon be orders to keep the man out.

Those men who come to the bank in earnest present their checks, they wait until they receive their gold, and then they go; but not without having transacted real business.

They do not put the paper down, speak about the excellent signature, and discuss the excellent document; but they want their money for it, and they are not content without it. These are the people who are always welcome at the bank, and not triflers. Alas, a great many people play at praying. They do not expect God to give them an answer, and thus they are mere triflers. Our Heavenly Father would have us do real business with Him in our praying. —C. H. Spurgeon (Contributed by Kelly Tyler)

Declining love for believers.

Backsliding can advance so far that brotherly love, one of the most basic marks of saving grace (1 John 3:14), seems to all but disappear within you. You disagree over nominal matters with fellow believers, unwilling to set down your preferences for their sakes, and those disagreements grow into large fights. James 4:1 says, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" Worldliness in church members foments wars within the church. Plumer said, "As piety thus dies in the soul, charity diminishes, and censoriousness takes its place." —Joel Beeke, *The Cure for Backsliding*