

How useless worrying is! It removes no trouble, lightens no burden, and softens no hardness in one's lot. On the other hand, it only makes the trial greater and the heart in its feverishness, less strong for endurance. —J.R. Miller

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)

46. Q. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments (Deut. 10:4; Mt. 19:17).

47. Q. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves (Mt. 22:37-40).

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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FAITH TRUTH AND GODLINESS

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; (Titus 1:1-2).

Introductory remarks are often an overview or compendium of the underlying theology of the message and the aim of the writer regarding it. Such was the manner of Paul's address to Titus, his agent on the Isle of Crete. Paul immediately addresses the critical issues of faith, truth, and godliness. We consider the reason and urgency of his message regarding sound doctrine and warnings as to those who would pervert it: Sound doctrine (2:1); function of grace (2:11-12); expectation (2:13); Gospel (2:14); conduct (3:1ff); reminder of our past (3:3); regeneration (3:5); and the result (3:8). It is the purpose of Paul that the elements of salvation be in accord with each other. Therefore, we consider faith, understanding, and Godliness. God will be believed, fully known in the heart, and practiced in life. For this, Christ died and is risen, and ever lives to make intercession for us.

It is interesting in that in this day that men make much of titles and credentials while one so eminently qualified as Paul introduces himself as a slave (Doulos) and an Apostle (Apostolos). He identified himself as one who is owned by another and is sent with an authoritative message. This which he communicated to Titus is that which he believes and upon which he acts. We note then the accord of his ministry with the Gospel as redeemed and sent – So should it be with us.

The fact of God's choice of a people for

Himself is everywhere evident. A vast body of scripture in both the Old and New Testaments confirms this truth. That God has an elect people is in many places stated directly as it is here. In many cases it is alluded to or suggested. In any case, the scripture asserts that God does choose. To think otherwise then is to leave what grace does to chance and suggests that the will of God may be frustrated since it is also clear that God is determined to save people for His Name.

While God has chosen (Eph. 1:4), He has also ordained that those chosen should come to him through belief of the Truth. Therefore, Paul calls what they believe as “the faith of God's elect.” The existence of such a people is further confirmed in the next verse: Titus 1:2, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began...” The promise is from before the world began. Election is unto salvation. It is through “sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” that salvation comes. (2 Thess. 2:13). The faith spoken here brings to them the knowledge of how they were saved. Belief of the truth is an essential element of Godliness. Men try to separate various aspects of Christian life. Yet, knowing the truth brings us to both life and Godliness. (2 Pet 1:3). We note that Paul is emphatic in calling it “the faith.” We note the laxity of many as to what they believe or what they must believe. Faith is more than mere

belief that something is true. It involves trust and confidence in something or someone. The faith of God's elect is firmly anchored in Christ. Many indeed trust themselves, their judgment or what they have done. Others look to things and possessions and feel secure. Paul acknowledged the saints at Thessalonica by saying in 1 Thessalonians 1:4 "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." He knew this to be so in that they displayed trust in Christ and were engaged in such works as gave evidence of a work of the Spirit. Such people see themselves as totally dependent on the Lord, His mercy and His grace. Although they were led to a decision, their salvation did not spring from a human choice.

The Truth, understood, taken to heart and embraced is that which distinguishes those who are truly saved. They acknowledge Christ as "The way, The Truth, and The Life." It is not the volume of knowledge here, but the full understanding of what is revealed. The faith of God's elect is not blind or unaware of what has taken place. They know that the fall left them hopelessly ruined. Men are without both desire and ability. (Rom. 3:11). One awakened by the Holy Spirit realizes that he has nothing of what is required of God for deliverance from sin and judgment. They know that their only hope is that some provision be made on their behalf. True faith lays hold on the fact that God has made provision in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the substitute for sinners. They do not see this as an aid to salvation with the rest being up to them, but rather as the complete and perfect satisfaction before God for them personally. To suggest that God sent His Son to the cross without design and specific purpose for a

specific people (God's elect) is to suggest that in the end God is dependent on man to accomplish His desire. Thus, man's will would override God's will. Never!

This is after (according to) Godliness (11 times in the Pastoral epistles and 4 times in 2 Peter). A definition from Webster: "A religious life; a careful observance of the laws of God and performance of religious duties proceeding from love and reverence of the divine character." Paul emphasized the importance of it to Timothy: *For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (1 Timothy 4:8)*. It is related to contentment: *But godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:6)*. And we see the encouragement to flee and follow: *But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (1 Timothy 6:11)*. And he warned him of the danger of imitations in those who "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (2 Timothy 3:5)"

So, the Spirit of God brings life (ye must be born again) and leads unerringly to Christ and grants the gift of faith (Eph. 2:8) wherein trust is exclusively in Christ. Thus, such have been made "New Creatures" in Christ and they persevere and live in the hope of eternal life. Why? It is because they see the answer in Christ of a promise given before the world began. (Tit. 1:2).

"The Gospel is a doctrine according to godliness; the truths of it have an influence, both on internal and external godliness; they direct to, and promote the worship and fear of God, and a religious, righteous, sober, and godly life and conversation. John Gill." *bhs*

Doctrine severed from practice is dead; practice severed from doctrine is just another form of self-salvation and self-improvement. A disciple of Christ is a student of theology. —Michael Horton

The Scriptures teach that prior to conversion, a man is darkened in his understanding and walks in the futility of his mind. Furthermore, his mind is hostile toward God, suppresses the truth of God, and cannot subject itself to the law of God. Consequently, the unconverted person has a completely distorted view of reality, and it is not an exaggeration to say that he is wrong about everything that truly matters. He knows something of the one true God and His majesty, but he does not think it necessary to honor Him as God or give thanks. He is filled with self and sees the promotion of self as the end of all things. The laws of God are written on his heart, but he does not think it necessary or advantageous to follow their dictates. Instead, he fights against his conscience and seeks to suppress what he knows to be true. He knows that all who commit evil deeds are worthy of death, but he does not think it necessary to fear. He not only does the same things but also gives hearty approval to those who practice them. His own mortality confronts him as death swallows up everyone around him, but he does not think the plague will ever reach his doorstep. To put it simply, the unconverted person is wrong and yet arrogantly continues to do what is right in his own eyes. He is on a way that seems right to him, but its end is the way of death.

--Paul Washer, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion*

It hasn't been granted to us to understand fully the mysterious relationship between the eternal counsels of God, the promises of God, and the cries of His people, nor is it necessary that we understand. God is "over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:6), and His providence, power, and presence guarantee that His purposes will be accomplished. But in His grace, He has given us the privilege of prayer so that we might share in His great work of saving sinners and building His church. "We have not the remotest conception of what is done by our prayers," wrote Oswald Chambers, "nor have we the right to try and examine and understand it; all we know is that Jesus Christ laid all stress on prayer." Godly Robert Murray McCheyne wrote, "If the veil of the world's machinery were lifted off, how much we would find is done in answer to the prayers of God's children." 5 If you need a definition of prayer, here's one to consider: Prayer is the means God has ordained to glorify Himself by sharing His love with His children, meeting their needs, and accomplishing His purposes through their lives and the lives of others. This suggested definition covers some of the various aspects of prayer: worship—glorifying God; communion—loving God; petition—asking God for what we need; intercession—asking God for what others need.

--Warren Wiersbe, *Prayer 101*

And according to the New Testament letters of both Romans and Galatians, another of the supernatural heart changes the Spirit creates in all Christians is to cause them to cry, "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). Thus when someone is born again, the Holy Spirit gives that person new Fatherward desires, a new heavenward orientation whereby we cry, "Abba, Father!" In other words, all those indwelt by the Holy Spirit really want to pray. The Holy Spirit causes all the children of God to believe that God is their Father and fills them with an undying desire to talk to Him. --Donald Whitney,