

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

VOL. 20, NO. 8
MAY, 1989

SELF-EXAMINATION OR DISCOVERY OF FAMILY TRAITS

II Cor. 13:5 II Peter 1:10

Self-examination is a very important, and yet a most neglected exercise. Multitudes are guilty of fatal presumption in the matter of the salvation of their souls. I would importune each of you, by all that is solemn and weighty, to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." In a little while it will cease to be a question. The time will have passed for gracious discoveries, and in hell the discoveries will but reveal horrors more and more bitterly astounding. **It is not our estate, nor our liberty that is involved in this question, but our eternal existence in heaven or in hell.** Let us narrowly inspect our innermost being; let us rigidly scrutinize our heart; let us search what manner of men we be. No ship was ever wrecked by the captain's over-anxiety in taking his longitude and latitude but the wailing sea bears sad witness to the fate of careless mariners, who forgot their chart, and steered onward to rocks which a prudent foresight would have avoided. The bankrupt merchant cheers his spirit with the prospect of commencing trade again - business may yet prosper, he thinks but he who finds himself a bankrupt in another world, without God, without Christ,

without hope, must abide forever penniless, craving the hopeless boon of one drop of water to cool his burning tongue.

May God help us to improve this hour by leading you to think upon this important theme:

1. Let us advance some arguments for self-examination.

1. Because commanded. Whatever is worthy of God's command is worthy of our obedience.

2. Because COMPARATIVELY few people are saved. Many people get comfort out of the dangerous presumption that most people are saved. But we need rather to fear, because comparatively few are saved. Matt. 7:13-14. In every age there has been but a small minority saved. Men talk about millions being saved, but the Bible speaks in terms of thousands.

3. Because many professors are lost. Matt. 7:22-23, II Tim. 3:1-5, II Tim. 1:16.

4. Because there is danger of being

deceived thru over-confidence, or rather thru misplaced confidence. Many are expecting to get to heaven, who will lift up their eyes in hell - never getting their eyes open to their real condition until too late. Look at the deceptive agencies in this world: II Tim. 3:13; Rom. 16:17-18; I John 1:8; Jer. 17:9

II. HOW THIS EXAMINATION IS TO BE MADE. This is important. If you weigh yourselves on faulty scales you will get a false weight. If you start with a false premise, you will reach wrong conclusions.

1. What others think about us is not a safe standard of measurement. Let not the good opinion of fellow men mislead us. Your name be emblazoned high on the sky of public esteem, and yet not have your name on the Lamb's book of life. Your praises may be sung by admiring friends, and yet never hear Christ say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

2. Nor can we trust to conscience, for conscience is often controlled by a deceitful heart. Paul said, "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." (I Cor. 4:4)

3. This examination must be made in the light of God's word. God's word is the true balances of the sanctuary. It settles every question of the soul's condition and destiny. It is the mirror which reflects the likeness of the child of God. By the light of God's word the family traits, the characteristics of God's children, are to be discovered. The Bible describes God's people. It delineates their character and describes their feelings.

III. SOME OF THE MARKS OF A SAVED PERSON:

1. He possesses a spirit that justifies God and judges self. In Luke 7:35 we read, "But wisdom is justified of all her children." Wisdom here stands for God. God is the personification of wisdom. All the children of Wisdom, from the days of Abel down to the present moment, have been marked by this family trait. All God's children - all the sons of Wisdom have in some degree, always exhibited this moral feature - they have

justified God. But, maybe my hearers have a difficulty in understanding what is meant by justifying God. We will bring forward another passage or two, which we trust, will make it plain. In Luke 7:29 we read, "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Here we have the two generations - the saved and the lost, brought as it were, face to face. The publicans justified God and condemned themselves, for we are told that those whom John baptized "confessed their sins." They agreed with what God had to say about them as lost sinners. They accepted God's counsel against themselves. They took the place of sinners before God. They judged themselves. The Pharisees justified themselves and judged God, by rejecting the counsel of God against themselves. The publicans submitted to the baptism of John - the baptism of repentance: the Pharisees refused that baptism - refused to repent - refused to humble and to judge themselves. This is the initial grace in the child of God - he confesses his sins, he judges himself, he takes the place of a sinner before God. He is not filled with the false sense of goodness, but realizes his badness. Did you know this Bible did not have a good thing to say about the natural man. By nature the children of wrath. The carnal mind enmity against God. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God. So, one to the family characteristics of God's children is that they accept God's verdict about their condition. They have a spirit of self abnegation - a spirit opposed to the self-righteous, haughty, self-sufficient independent Pharisee. Matt. 5:3. It is the deep consciousness of our innate depravity. It is a heart experience that "without Christ we can do nothing." It is to see ourselves as hell-deserving sinners. It was the spirit that prompted Job to say, "I abhor myself"; and caused Isaiah to say, "Woe is me"; and Paul to cry "O wretched man that I am"; and John to write, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, etc."

2. Faith is another mark of a saved person. All men do not have faith. The true faith is the faith of God's elect. Faith is the app-ropriation of Christ and

his finished work as the only ground of our acceptance with God. Faith reckons Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. Faith says, "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." Faith says I am satisfied with what Christ did for my redemption, and I am not trying to add to it. How did the Jew know that sins were forgiven? Read Lev. 4:23-30. Suppose you had met the Jew returning from the priest; and you had asked him how he knew that his sins were forgiven him? What would he have said? Would he not have said: "I know my sin is forgiven because God says so. My sin came to my knowledge; and I could get no rest until the blood of my sin-offering flowed. These hands have been laid on the head of the goat. It thus became my substitute. It was killed I saw it bleed and die. Its blood touched the horns of the altar, the atonement was made for my sin - and God said, "It shall be forgiven him."

C. D. COLE

FOR JESUS SAKE

II Corinthians 4:5

Christianity is something more than a system of ethics; it is attachment to a person, who is at once the object of trust and the power of an endless life. I John 5:12; Gal 2:20; Phil 1:21. This person is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Acts 4:12. The practical value of our religion is measured by our love to Christ. I Corinthians 13.

"For Jesus' sake," and equivalent phrases often occur in the New Testament. May the Lord bless us in the study of this expression.

1. The Scriptures teach that it is for Christ's sake that God has saved us. Eph 4:32; I John 2:12; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14. Christ is the meritorious cause of everything that has been done for us. Rom 8:32.

2. The Scriptures teach that everything we do should be done for Jesus' sake. Col 3:23. Anything that cannot be done for the sake of Jesus should not be done. Can you dance for Jesus' sake? Can you play cards for Jesus' sake? "For

Jesus' sake," is the criterion of all real success. Matt 5:11.

3. The motive of doing things for Jesus' sake gives us a power that nothing else can give. Men can do things for Jesus' sake that they cannot do from any other motive. I have heard Bro. McDonald tell of trying to reconcile two brothers in the church. One of them resisted every appeal to forgive his brother until Bro. McDonald asked him to do it for Christ's sake. This appeal broke his stubbornness and subdued his rebellious spirit. Think of the things the Apostle Paul did as a minister of Christ. II Cor 11:24. Now in II Cor 12:10 he gives us the power of such a life.

4. We learn from the Scriptures some of the things we are to do for Christ's sake.

1) We are to practice forgiveness towards one another for Christ's sake. Eph 4:32; Col 3:13

2) We are to be missionaries for Christ's sake. III JOHN 7

3) We ought to be willing to lose our lives for Christ's sake. Matt 10:39 To lose one's life means to sacrifice all human rewards and earthly comforts. This is to be done for Christ's sake. Phil 1:29.

C. D. COLE

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