

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

INDEPENDENT • MISSIONARY • ESTABLISHED 1786

VOLUME 27, NO. 4

JANUARY, 1997

SELF-EXAMINATION OR THE DISCOVERY OF FAMILY TRAITS

BY: C. D. COLE

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" II Corinthians 13:5.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall," 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 bank-

rupt in another world, without God, without Christ, without hope, must abide forever penniless, craving the hopeless doom 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:

Some arguments for self examination

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

B. 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. *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,"* Matthew 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.

C. Because many professors are lost. *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity,"* Matthew 7:22-23. *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters,*

proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away," II Timothy 3:1-5. *"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain,"* II Timothy 1:16.

4. Because there is danger of being deceived through over-confidence, or rather through 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 it is too late. Look at the deceptive agencies in this world: *"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived,"* II Timothy 3:13. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple,"* Romans 16:17-18. *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,"* I John 1:8. *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* Jeremiah 17:9.

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 promise, you will reach wrong conclusions.

A. What others think about us is not a safe standard of measurement. Let not the good opinion of fellow men mislead us. Your name may be emblazoned high on the sky of public esteem, and yet you may not have your name on the Lamb's book of life. Your praises may be sung by admiring friends, and yet you may never hear Christ say, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,"* Matthew 25:21.

B. Nor can we trust to conscience, for conscience is often controlled by a deceitful heart. *"For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord,"* I Corinthians 4:4.

C. 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.

Some of the marks of a saved person

A. He possesses a spirit that justifies God and judges self. *"But wisdom is justified of all her children,"* Luke 7:35. 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 readers 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. *"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,"* Luke 7:29-30. 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? We are by nature the children of wrath. The carnal mind is 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 of 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. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,"* Matthew 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,..."

B. 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 appropriation 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 Jews know that their sins were forgiven? *"Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish: And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the Lord: it is a sin offering. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering. And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him. And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar,"* Leviticus 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."

THE CURE FOR CARE

BY: C.D. COLE

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you," I Peter 5:7.

INTRODUCTION: To appreciate the cure for care we must understand something of the curse of care. The word care means distraction and worry. There are many evils to be laid at the door of worry:

1. Breaks down health. Worry more than work wrecks the human body.
2. Makes unfit for the service of God.
3. Makes others unhappy.
4. Endangers our spiritual prosperity. It chokes the word of God. It is a reflection on our Heavenly Father's care of us.

The cure for care

We must distinguish between two kinds of care. There is a kind of care that is lawful, and this is the kind that can be cast upon God. There is another kind of care unlawful, this cannot be rolled upon God, he will not have it.

Unlawful care is called the care of the world in the parable of the sower. The thorny ground hearer is the man who hears the word of God and the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word. Fashion, pleasure, self-indulgence, you cannot bring these things to God for help.

Lawful care is the care of our text. This is the care to be cast upon the Lord. This includes:

- a. Fear of failure in the Lord's work. *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* This is the fear of Philippians 2:12. Cast this care upon Him. He works in us to will and to do. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,*

forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," I Corinthians 15:58. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it,"* Isaiah 55:11.

b. Fear of enemies. The faithful servant will have his enemies. Pretended friends will forsake him. All who will live godly shall suffer persecution. Paul warned, *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears,"* II Timothy 4:3.

c. Fear of poverty. It is hard for the man of God with a conscience to make an honest living. On the question of money the world has the jitters.

d. Sorrow because of natural affection. Sickness and death of loved ones. God is the God of all comfort. Cast this care upon Him.

The ground of this confidence and trust

He careth for you. The word for care in the first clause means that which distracts you, cuts you in twain, which cuts your peace and joy in pieces. The word in the last clause means that we, God's children, are the objects of His care and attention. What a thought! He careth for me. If the Almighty God, my Heavenly Father careth for me, then why should I fear anything?

"O Hannah, I do not see how you could bear so much sorrow!" said one woman to her neighbor. "I did not bear it," was the quick reply, "The Lord bore it for me." "Yes," said the other woman, "I know we must take our troubles to the Lord." "Yes," said Hannah, "but we must do more than that. We must leave them there." "Most

people," she continued, "take their burdens to Him, but bring them away with them again, and are just as worried and unhappy as ever.

"Beside my baby's crib at night,
I lay upon my bed;
My little one could hear the storm,
and feared the dark, she said.

The night was dark, the clouds were low,
the storm's voice sounded wild,
So baby's heart craved some one near,
lest danger meet the child.

Yet not content, my baby girl,
for me just near to linger,
Her tiny hand stole out the bed
and clasped around my finger.
I could not chide, refuse her plaint,
be hardened to her tears;
She understood no reasons why,
so I must soothe her fears.

I too, a child about to rest,
my play and cares aside,
Can ask no dearer, sweeter boon
than near Thee to abide.
The night is dark, the clouds are low,
the storm to me is wild,
For I, too, know not reason why,
since I am but Thy child.

My life, O Father, in Thy hand,
may little be or much;
But I, Thy child, shall be content,
if I may feel Thy touch.
Thou'll not withhold Thy care by night,
by day Thy help divine;
And dark or cloud or storm are naught--
my hand shall rest in thine."