

The Mission Letter

The Mission Team, PO Box 3323, Leesville, SC 29070



The Latest Report on The Orphans of Covenant Baptist Church

'Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.' (Matthew 18:5)

Prayer Items:

- Parents to invest \$41.00 per month to support a girl orphan.
- Funds to help send the Mission Team to India this September and to do its ministry work
- Bible Funds to purchase Bibles to be shared this September. we are praying to be able to purchase 1,000 Telagu Bibles.

After talking with Pastor Prabhu this week about the trip that we have coming up in September, I truly felt the desire to go over to Guntur, India and seeing the orphans that we have in the housing over there and just see how good they are all doing. Prabhu told me that each and every one of them is not only well, but strong in school as well as strong in their Bible studies at home and in their church. Praise the Lord!

It has been a challenge to try to get and to keep these children off the streets, clean, well fed, and above all spiritually sound. They are learning each and every day what God has for them to do as part of His Kingdom. we are trykng to get these 3 orphanages on sound ground financially so that we c an start prying about possibly starting a 4th home that will bring 21 more girls into a safe and sound living environment. Please pray that God would open the necessary doors to allow us to do just that very thing. It would be a great blessing to see 21 more girls living in a home that they would be safe in and not have to dig their next meal out of the trash piles. It is so worth the work and effort to see thses children living in a safe habitat rather than on the streets. AMEN!

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For more information as to just how you can help, please call us at 803-604-2187 and we'll give you all of the information that you'll need to help.

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In Christ,
Alton Crapps

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The Law and Murder: Matthew 5:21-26

"First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:24). This is far from implying that the regaining of his brother's esteem is a good work which entitles him to the favor of God. No—the man who rests his hope of the acceptance of his religious services on the consciousness that his brethren have nothing against him, is leaning on a broken reed: the only valid ground of hope for the acceptance of either our persons or our worship is the free grace of God. But it means that, when peace has been restored, he must not forget to return and offer his gift; for although God will not receive our worship unless—so far as in us lies—we are on loving terms with our neighbors, yet the performance of our duty to men in nowise frees us from the obligation of direct service to God.

"Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. Truly I say unto you, You shall by no means come out thence, until you have paid the uttermost farthing" (25, 26). This is one of the passages appealed to by the Papists in support of their Christ-insulting dogma of purgatory: that they have to apply to such verses as these in order to bolster up their error shows how hard pressed they are to find anything in the Scriptures which even appears to favor their vile tenets.

The Roman expositors are not even agreed among themselves. Some take the "Adversary" to be the Devil, and the "Judge" God Himself. Others among them suppose the "Adversary" to be God administering His Law, the "Judge" they regard as Christ, the "officer" an angel, and the "prison" to be purgatory; "the way" the span of our life on earth. "Agree with God while you are in this life, lest you come before Christ in judgment, and He cause His angels to cast you into purgatory, and there you remain until you have made full satisfaction for all your venial sins." But such a concept utterly ignores the context, where Christ lays down a rule of reconciliation between man and man, and not between God and man. Moreover, such an interpretation (?) pits the Father against the Son. Finally, it denies the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, making the sinner himself the one who provides satisfaction for his venial sins.

Many Protestant commentators regard verses 25 and 26 as a parable, which portrays the grave peril of the sinner and his urgent need of believing the Gospel. Injurious conduct toward our fellow-men renders us noxious to the wrath of God, who is our Adversary-at-law. We are on the way to the Judgment-seat and our time here is but short at best. But a way of reconciliation is revealed in the Gospel, and of this we should avail ourselves immediately. If it be neglected and despised, then we forsake our own mercies, and close the door of hope against us. If we die with our sins unpardoned, then nothing awaits us but a certain judgment, and we shall be cast into the Prison of Hell, and being unable to offer any satisfaction to Divine justice we must there suffer the due reward of our iniquities forever and ever. Such a concept may evidence the ingenuity of the commentator, but where is the slightest hint in the passage that Christ was speaking a parable?

Personally we see no reason whatever for not understanding our Lord's words here literally. Christ had exhorted the party doing wrong to seek to be reconciled with his brother, by acknowledging the offense and making reparation according to the injury inflicted. In support thereof, He had advanced the solemn consideration that until this be done, communion with God is broken and our worship is unacceptable to Him. Here (knowing how proud and obstinate the human heart is, and how slow men are to yield and submit to this duty) Christ descended to a lower level, and points out another reason why it is highly expedient for the offending believer to put matters right with him whom he has wronged, namely, lest the aggrieved one go to the law, and this involve him in costly litigation, or even procure his imprisonment.

"Agree with your adversary" is just the same as, "Be reconciled to your brother," for "adversary" is a general name applied to all persons in common who have a controversy or are at variance with each other. "Agree with" the one you have provoked, seek restoration to his favor-by repairing the injury you have done him. An injured one, or a creditor, might at any time sue him, demanding that his case be tried in the magistrate's court. While on their way to court, there was still time to come to an amicable agreement between themselves, but once they appeared before the magistrate the matter would pass out of their hands, and be subject to the decision of the court, whose business it is to see that strict justice be impartially enforced.

The view given above was held by the renowned Calvin, "If in this place the judge signify God, the adversary the Devil, the officer an angel, the prison purgatory, I will readily subscribe to them (the Papists). But if it be evident to everyone that Christ thus intended to show how many dangers and calamities persons expose themselves, who prefer obstinately exerting the rigor of the law to acting upon the principles of equity and kindness, in order the more earnestly to exhort his disciples to an equitable concord, pray where will purgatory be found?" Verses 26 and 27 are to be regarded as a warning of what may befall those who heed not the command in verses 24 and 25. If we refuse to humble ourselves and strive to preserve peace, we must not be surprised if others deal harshly with us and sue us. In closing, it may be observed that Christ here approves of the magisterial office, his proceeding against the guilty, and of imprisonment.

THE GRAND MARK OF GOD'S ELECT

"But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another" (1 Thessalonians 4:9).

The two epistles to the Thessalonians are the earliest of Paul's letters, and are filled with practical counsel for Christians of all time, such as "loving one another." Paul had said earlier, "And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you" (3:12). Here is the grand mark of God's elect! How precious is divinely-taught "love" for one another. This love should "increase more and more" (4:10), as this "love" is the believer's supreme characteristic, our Lord Jesus saying, "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

"Brotherly love" is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, being foreign to sinners by nature.

Thus we find that the wonderful Greek word used here by Paul, *theodidaktoi*, "taught by God," proves this without question. No matter what we may learn from others, or no matter what we may teach ourselves, there is nothing greater in all the world than to be "taught by God" directly. This coined word of Paul occurs only here in the New Testament, though it is found in ecclesiastical writers. The word is a passive verb, yet an adjective, and reveals how the "words" of Scripture are inspired of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). "God" in Greek is *theos*, and "to teach" is *didasko*, so *theodidaktoi* means "divinely taught."

"Divinely taught," not just man-taught or religiously-taught. This truth is spelled out in numerous Old Testament passages, and our Savior clearly emphasized the same (see Isaiah 54:13 and John 6:45). "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for ALL shall know me, from the least to the greatest" (Hebrews 8:11). Here is our assurance that the preaching of the gospel will be successful in the earth, for all of the elect will "come to Christ" (John 6:44-47; 17:3,24), and we personally "prove" our election by loving Christ, His truth, and His people.

The Holy Spirit calls God's elect to embrace Christ in saving faith, so being "converted" to the Lord Jesus Christ means to know the amazing love of Christ, which causes us to have real, heart love for all of the people of God (Romans 8:28-34; 1 Peter 4:8). "Taught by God to love one another" is the grand mark of "the elect of God" (Colossians 3:12-14), without which we cannot know for sure our acceptance in Christ.

Come, saints, and sing in sweet accord,
With solemn pleasure tell,
The covenant made with David's Lord;
In all things ordered well.

John Kent
