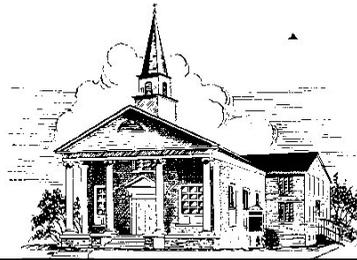


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Address Service Requested

Ushers for October
Roger Wiggins, Head Usher
Paul Houge
John Woodward
Larry Howell
Steven Holman



First Presbyterian Church

Louisville, Mississippi

First Presbyterian Church, Louisville

.....
For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
(1 Corinthians 2:2)

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October 2018

To Know Ourselves

By Sinclair Ferguson. This article was accessed at <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2018/10/to-know-ourselves.php>.

Calvin's *Institutes* opens with a strikingly important sentence--crafted first by a young man in his mid-twenties and only fine tuned between its first appearance in 1536 and its final expression a few years before his death. Wisdom--the knowledge coupled with practical understanding and piety that is the underlying concern of the entire project--involves knowing God and knowing ourselves. Truly to know ourselves we need to know God; come to know God and at last we see ourselves in our true context.

The thought--as commentators on the *Institutes* point out--is not entirely original. But its roots (as they do not always note) go way beyond the Augustinian tradition of theology, to the opening chapter of the Bible. God made man as his image (Gen. 1:26). Our creation, our very being, is defined by that relationship to him. Living makes sense and gives joy only when we live out that relationship before him. So the question "What is man?" must be answered by a sentence that has a reference to God in it.

When, in the pursuit of the project of the self, we *a priori* exclude the person of God we not only cut ourselves off from knowing him, but from knowing ourselves. The project ends in frustration. Fulfilled life requires that we know God in Jesus Christ (Jn 17:3). By implication, exclude him and we lose all sense of proportion. For when we measure ourselves by ourselves we turn out to be the ideal height! But when we are persuaded that God is the fountain of every good, and we seek and find him (or are found by him), then, says Calvin, we begin to taste "complete happiness." Only then will we gladly give ourselves to the Lord.

Who Is He?

If my first question about God is "What is he?" then I am already mistaken. The really important question is "Who is he?" "What is God like?" The biblical answer is that he is the fountain of all good and that he reveals himself as such in creation. Yes he is a Judge. The naive reader would expect Calvin to stress that! But grasp this: God is in himself so very good that "even if there were no Hell Christian believers would shudder to offend him." Yes, he is that good!

Of course, all men know there is a God. (And, paradoxically, idolatry is one of the clearest proofs of that.) For a certain knowledge of him (albeit not covenant fellowship, not saving knowledge) is inescapable.

For one thing, we are his image. The sense of dependence on him and duty to him is engraved in us and can never be effaced, albeit we repress and stifle it. The echoes of our destiny and calling to live as God's image can never be silenced, never finally repressed, no matter how hard we try.

(continued from page 1)

Moreover since the entire created cosmos is the theater of his revealed glory, there is no "where" we can go without being confronted by his handiwork. His autograph is everywhere. There is no "where" to hide. Take the wings of the morning, travel faster than the speed of light to the uttermost parts of the earth--and his revelation awaits us the moment we land! It is not just in Brooklyn that there is No Last Exit! But why would we ever want to escape from the God who is the fountain of all good?

Who are We?

Man is God's image. The implanted knowledge of God is universal. Yes, perverted and fragmented by the fall, but still real. It gives rise to the seed of religion, notes Calvin. An instinct to praise and worship is inbuilt in all men. Testimony to it is seen in distorted form in idolatry (whether devotion to possessions or to the Philadelphia 76ers!) as well as in true worship. In a thousand different ways humanity manifests its lesser devotions. For if we will not worship the Creator we must worship something--the creature (Romans 1:25). As Milton imaginatively expresses it in *Paradise Lost*, having refused to bow to the Lord and his word, as Eve turns from the tree whose fruit she has stolen "she low obeisance made"--she who refused to worship the Creator (as C S Lewis pointed out in his *Preface to Paradise Lost*) now worships a vegetable!

In one way or another, as Calvin notes, recognition of God cannot be finally repressed and at times will be forced out of the mouths of even the reprobate. They cannot consistently maintain their denials of him. At the memorial service for the "atheist" British novelist Sir Kingsley Amis, his son Martin related how his father had been asked by the Russian author Yevgeni Yevtushenko if it were true he was an atheist. Sir Kingsley tellingly replied: "Yes. But it is more than that. You see, I hate him!"

If indeed we are both surrounded and invaded by the revelation of God, the unbeliever's denial of God's existence will eventually show itself for what it really is--a refusal of Him. We should always be on the lookout for that loose thread in the tapestry of the unbeliever's life and speech. It may require patience, but it may prove to be vital.

The heavens declare God's glory, and so the astronomer is also a theologian who explores the Book of Nature in which God has inscribed his glory. But "what is man that you care for him?" means that the anatomist who explores the intricate, even microscopic details of the human body, also studies the revelation of God. Above and within man, God shows that he is our Father. This is Calvin's heartbeat! For, he notes, "no one gives himself freely and willingly to God's service unless, having tasted his fatherly love, he is drawn to worship and love him in return" (I. V. 3).

We have within ourselves a veritable divine "workshop." Yet instead of praising him men swell with pride in themselves and find reasons for rejecting the revelation God has given to them. Instead of acknowledging the true and living God men "substitute nature for God."

We have all seen or heard it. A secular naturalist engages in the activities Calvin here describes--whether by exploring the heavens or investigating things on earth. Insects and animals with the most limited mental capacity are said to engage in all kinds of detailed logical thinking as they develop coping mechanisms in a hostile environment. And as the program ends the naturalist comments "And so again we find ourselves saying 'Isn't Mother Nature wonderful?'"

But who, one might ask, is Mother Nature? Why is her name always capitalized? On what logic has our agnostic or atheist presenter smuggled in his or her appeal to the transcendent? How profoundly true are Paul's words that men exchange the truth about God for the lie. Mother Nature? Or, Father God?

We will be observing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper Sunday, October 28th, during the morning service.

There will be a Women's Bible Study on marriage each Friday, starting at 9:00a.m., in the home of Rachel Brownlee. Nursery is provided.

**There will be no meeting Friday, Oct. 5th.*

Women in the Church News

WIC Noon Circle will meet Monday, Oct. 8th, in the Family Life Building. Linda Wiggins is the lesson moderator. Sharon Kennedy, Marilyn Morgan and Lisa Forster are the hostesses.

The Diaconate
will meet Sunday,
Oct. 14th at
8:00a.m.

Church LIFE Dessert List

10/3 NEED VOLUNTEERS

10/10 Sharon Kennedy, Marilyn Morgan,
Sherry Anderson

10/17 Midge Davis, Jessica Madison,
Bonnie Fair, Nancy Peters

10/24 Alice Wooten, Laura Brown,
Jennifer Mills

10/31 Karin Phillips & Gaye Hogue

Church LIFE Night

Church LIFE Night has resumed. The meal will begin at 6:00p.m. each Wednesday evening, followed by classes for children, youth and adults. This is a great way to fellowship with our church family. We hope you can make plans to attend.

2nd Sunday Supper

2nd Sunday Super will be Sunday, Oct. 14th, immediately following the evening worship service, in the home of John and Rachel Brownlee. Please bring a covered dish.

The Session will
meet Monday,
Oct. 15th,
at 7:00p.m.

Duty Deacon

10/7 Kevin Hudson

10/14 John Brownlee

10/21 Dan Mittan

10/28 Jay McCown

YOUTH HOSTS

10/7 Lex & Margaret Taylor

10/14 2nd Sunday Supper— no Youth

10/18 Family Life building

10/25 Lex & Margaret Taylor

October 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m.	3 Church LIFE Night 6:00p.m.	4	5 Ladies' Bible Study 9:00a.m.	6
7	8Noon Circle 12:00p.m.	9Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m	10Church LIFE Night 6:00p.m.	11	12Ladies' Bible Study 9:00a.m.	13
14Diaconate Meeting 8:00a.m.	15 Session Meeting 7:00p.m.	16Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m	17Church LIFE Night 6:00p.m.	18	19Ladies' Bible Study 9:00a.m.	20
21	22	23Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m	24Church LIFE Night 6:00p.m.	25	26Ladies' Bible Study 9:00a.m.	27
28	29	30Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m	31Church LIFE Night 6:00p.m. FALL FESTIVAL???			