

# Banner

"You have set up a banner for those who fear you, that it may be displayed because of truth." Psalm 60:4



*"Pleasing God,  
Making Disciples  
of  
Jesus Christ"*

A COMMUNICATION MINISTRY OF QUIDNESSETT BAPTIST CHURCH

**H**ave you thought about Providence lately? No, not the city near to us where it seems like construction is linked to eternal life—never ending. And no, not the mall named after the city, Providence Place, where traffic snares easily become a battle zone between flesh and spirit.

The Providence I am referring to is defined in The Heidelberg Catechism as *"the almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches, and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance,*

*but by His Fatherly hand."*

For a moment, let the truth of this definition sink into our souls especially the last portion, *"and all things come, not by chance, but by His Fatherly hand"*. Feeling humbled? If not, we need to ask—do we believe it? I mean "really" believe it? Not just a nod of the head in assent, but when life appears to "go

***"It is when Providence 'appears' harsh we go from magnifying it to murmuring against it."***

south" and circumstances seem overwhelming, is the catechism still true in our heads AND

hearts? It is easy to magnify Providence with praise when things are smooth. However, when Providence "appears" harsh we go from magnifying it to murmuring against it!

So, in this issue of THE BANNER, we will look at God's Providence, lessons to learn and proper responses to seek.

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# The Quidnessett BANNER

## GOSPEL GLIMPSES

Dog tired. The hearty fishermen felt spent. The rising of the sun only confirmed the end to a fruitless night. All night long, they tossed the nets over the side, hoping for a catch, only to retrieve their nets as they were launched. Tossed over empty and retrieved empty.

Being good stewards of their trade, the only thing left to do was take care of their equipment. They left their boats, began to wash the nets, and hoped for another night (LUKE 5:2). However, Providence had a different plan. Let's pick up the account in LUKE's gospel—*On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on Him to hear the Word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and He saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen*

*had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, He asked Him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your Word I will let down the nets"* (LUKE 5:1-5).

It appears Simon responded to the Lord's command with the air of fatalistic resignation. Whether true or not, we do read a little resistance to the command.

What about us? When the way of the Lord appears contrary to our reasoning, doesn't resistance attempt to raise a hand saying, "Wait

a minute". Simon may have started in that direction, but he didn't stay in that direction. And herein is the challenge to properly respond to Providence as it goes against reason.

Left unchecked, reasoning against Providence produces excuses for not submitting to its unfolding. Simon didn't allow his reasoning to override his obedience.

I don't think it would be a stretch to assume the place where the Lord tells them to let down the nets was the very place they had toiled all night for nothing. That would smack Simon's reasoning pretty hard and show him complete dependence on God's Providence!

How did Simon end? Submitting to Providence not fatalistically, but obediently. In the same way we are to respond—according to His Word.

## THE PASTOR'S PEN

Our Bible contains some gripping sea stories. We know about Jonah's sea adventure and the one in the book of Acts reveals Divine Providence taking the Apostle Paul to Rome through rough seas. The story unfolds in ACTS 27:13. We enter the scene in verse 20—*when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.*

Strange words describing the hopeless conditions of these sailors. Strange because these guys were not novices. On the contrary, the crew consisted of confident and seasoned mariners who knew about storms and how to weather them. However, not in this case. When Providence unfolds to hem men and women in and show their total helplessness, the only response will be like these sail-

ors, *"all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned"*.

Not a few Puritan writers of the 17th and 18th century wrote about what they called "dark Providence". Basically, it's the description of the mysterious ways God works in and through His children for their good and His glory. It's labeled mysterious due to its cloak of darkness in our understanding as it unfolds.

The Psalmist rightly identifies the working of dark Providence in PSALM 77:19—*Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen (ESV).*

When we go through periods of dark Providence, and we will if we are His children. They will be marked by clouded understanding, not "seeing" the hand of God in our circumstances, or lacking a sense of the Lord's presence. This trial is just as the PSALMIST states, *your foot-*

*prints were unseen.*

So, what do we do in times of dark Providence? Ready for a great revelation of practical truth? Don't fall over if standing or fall out of your recliner if sitting. What do we do in those times when God seems so distant, so detached, so "unreal"? We do nothing. Yes. Nothing. Okay, not really, but close. We wait. We wait upon Him to unfold the purposes of His Providence. And waiting is not passive

Obadiah Sedgwick wrote, "Waiting upon Providence is an unlimited resignation of ourselves and desires to the seasons or times of God's good pleasure, with a continued expectation of some good promised." Sedgwick not only defines waiting upon Providence, but equally describes the pure essence of faith—submission to, trust in, and expectation from the God of dark Providence who does all things well.



## PROVIDENCE HANDLED PRACTICALLY

Obadiah Sedgwick

RHB, PB, 137 pages

Obadiah Sedgwick was a Puritan pastor of the 17th century whose other works in modern editions include *The Anatomy of Secret Sins*, *Christ's Counsel to His Languishing Church*, and *The Doubting Believer*. All his books are worthy of the Christian's time and investment.

In this paperback book, Sedgwick writes how the Christian should view his or her life and the life of Christ's church by the overriding hand of God in the areas of His general and special Providence.

The language has been updated for modern readers without sacrificing Sedgwick's insights and style. This is a very comforting book as we see the God who has promised never to leave us or forsake us even when His hands and heart seem clouded in Providence.

## QUOTABLE QUOTE

"It is the nature of faith to believe God upon His bare Word. It will not be, says sense; it cannot be, says reason; it both can and will be, says faith, for I have a promise."

JOHN TRAPP

Robert Knill

was a Baptist

preacher in the 19th century. He was very familiar with affliction. In his autobiography he wrote, *The school of affliction is the best place for understanding God's ways and Word*.

The unfolding of God's Providence contains affliction in our lives and teaches us two lessons. These lessons must be learned in the head (knowledge) and in the heart (experience). If either is missed, rest assured our loving Father will provide remedial classes in His school of Providence.

First lesson from Providence is to humbly walk with the God of Providence in His mysterious ways. What wandering sheep we are when seeking to avoid adversity which every child of God must go through for good. The work of

## WALKING WITH THE MASTER

Providence for our Christlike development is primarily a work of adversity. Paul encourages the disciples in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch with these words, "Saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God". (ACTS 14:22). Rebel against adversity and we are sheep walking away from the Shepherd.

A second lesson to be learned from Providence is total reliance on God's character. Experience ebbs and flows like the tide. Character remains an anchor in the storm. When Providence "appears" harsh, cling to Hebrews 13:8 - *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*. His unchangeableness allows us to rest in Providence with vibrant faith and assurance.

## DID YOU KNOW?



In this issue of The Banner we will offer some interesting facts about Christianity in the Holy

Land. Did you know?

- The first Christian writer to mention the term "holy land" was Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (c. 160). Justin was trying to show that the land God promised to Abraham would be inherited by Christians when Christ returned and built a new Jerusalem.
- Biblical scholar Jerome, who settled in Bethlehem in the 380s, believed that visiting the historical sites can help us understand Scripture better. Gregory of Nyssa, less enthusiastic

about the growing popularity of pilgrimages, assured his congregation that God was just as present with them in Cappadocia as in Jerusalem.

- Modern street vendors didn't invent the souvenir industry. When Byzantine pilgrims returned from Palestine, they brought back relics, oil from lamps above Christ's tomb, and many other tangible reminders of their visit. Some even tried to recreate the holy land in their own hometowns.
- In the last 60 years, the number of Palestinian Christians living in the holy land has dropped from as much as 40 percent of the population to only 2 or 3 percent, while most Palestinian Christians have emigrated elsewhere.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**It is you who light my  
lamp; the Lord, my God,  
lights up my darkness.**



Psalm 18:28

## Responding to Providence

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## *QBC HAPPENINGS*

### MAY 2008

- Second Saturday of service will be held May 10th, meeting in the library at 8:45 a.m.
- Young at Heart monthly fellowship will be held, Tuesday, May 13th at 12:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
- Short term missions trip to Mexico will be from May 14th through May 21st.

### JUNE 2008

- Men's Study, *The Fight to the Death*, will be held Tuesday, June 8th, at 7:00 p.m.
- Young at Heart annual picnic will be held Tuesday, June 10th at 12:00p.m.
- Second Saturday of service will be held June 14th, meeting in the library at 8:45 a.m.

THE QUIDNESSETT

# Banner

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Jesus Christ"



The Quidnessett Banner is the bi-monthly newsletter of Quidnessett Baptist Church. It is free of charge and readily available for all who would like to be placed on our mailing list. If you desire to receive The Quidnessett Banner in your home, simply contact the church office.

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