

The law of God, though it can and does teach us the way of holiness, can never bring us holiness. The Lord God alone remains our sanctification. —Harold Senkbeil

The New Hampshire Confession of Faith

By J. Newton Brown 1833

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

IV. Of the Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the Mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all sufficient Savior.

Eph.2:3, Matt. 18:11, I John4:10, I Cor.3:5-7, Acts 15:11, John 3:16, John1:1-14, Heb. 4:14, Heb. 12-24, Phil. 2:9&14, II Cor. 5:21, Isa. 42:21, Phil. 2:8, Gal. 4:4-5, Rom. 3:21, Isa. 53:4-5, Matt. 20:28, Rom.4:25, Rom. 3:21-26, I John 2:3, I Cor. 15:1-3, Heb.9:13-15, Heb.1:8, Heb. 1:3, Col. 3:1-4, Heb. 7:25, Col. 2:18, Heb. 7:26, Ps. 89:19, Ps.34

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:43-45)

This may well be one of the most difficult commandments to observe since we tend to rationalize the right to defend our honor and so react to offences as the world does. Where such difficulties arise men will seek away around the clear mandates of the Word of God. I have heard many who, when reminded that they are to “turn the other cheek,” come back with the argument that they only have two cheeks and are thus free to retaliate after being struck twice. The whole principle being taught is missed in failing to realize that we are to trust the Lord and so follow the example of Christ Himself. The way of the world is rather to act in pride. Granted, it is difficult to act kindly and to be gracious to those who hold us in contempt and would even do us harm. Yet, here our Lord, in the process of declaring the spirituality of the Law, exhorts His hearers to act in love toward lawbreakers and even haters of God. Having an awareness of our old nature and having often justified retaliations we might think this to be impossible. Such could only appear in us by the grace of God. Only where there is a new heart and a right spirit within us could we so act in obedience to this commandment.

Our Lord’s teaching here seems to address Pharisical tradition rather than Old Testament precept. Perhaps this is why He said “you have

heard that it hath been said...” The Pharisees tended to be very rigid and precise in enforcing their traditions. Men tend to defend most strongly those things that originate with themselves. Truth needs no defense as it is clearly beheld in the Word. Thus, they were found to pass by such a teaching as this in that it would come under the category of the “weightier things of the Law.” So, they are characterized as such in teaching the hatred of their enemies.

The Old Testament teachings reveal the very opposite of the traditions of the Pharisees. This was exposed on many occasions by our Lord. We see this same precept taught in such passages as, *If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him. (Exodus 23:4-5)*. The writer of Proverbs is more general in declaring, *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee. (Proverbs 25:21-22)*. Paul quotes this passage in Romans 12:20-21.

In looking to examples in practice we must first consider the actions of Christ Jesus our

Lord. We read early in John that “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” That progressed from not receiving Him to outright opposition and rejection. Yet, we find Him late in His earthly ministry weeping over Jerusalem. At His arrest we see Him gently restore the severed ear of one who came to take Him. From the cross we hear Him pray, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” After hearing the taunting and ridicule of a thief being crucified with Him, He took Him to Paradise. None of us have ever known such opposition and persecution and He bore it alone. We are declared blessed when we are persecuted.

Another example of such grace and love is witnessed in Stephen. Even as he is being stoned to death a prayer for their forgiveness comes forth. *And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:60).* Why would one act in that way? His last recorded words were a prayer for his enemies! First, there would be the realization of the perilous state of the souls of his persecutors and his compassion for them showed forth. Secondly, he would have remembered the mercy that He had received from the One who had prayed for him.

Paul suffered greatly at the hands of the Jews even to being stoned and left for dead. In keeping with the precepts of the Scripture and the example of Christ he expressed the deepest love and concern for them. See Romans 9:3. He was, no doubt, familiar with the writings of Jeremiah, often called the weeping prophet. We are reminded of the following: *Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears,*

that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! (Jeremiah 9:1). He went on in that passage to enumerate their sins and failures. Paul is seen caring in a similar way in his Epistle to the Philippians. *(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) (Philippians 3:18-19).* The context of this passage is of warning and comparison. However, Paul’s weeping was not for those to whom he wrote, rather it was for those enemies of the cross and the awful life they were living in the absence of the Hope that maketh not ashamed.

How shall we react? Do we look at the perpetrators of evil all about us with hatred and contempt? The hatred of God, His Son, and the evidence of the Spirit is all about us. They hate God, why should we not hate them? But then we are reminded of the example of our Lord above all. Peter wrote of Him: *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (1 Peter 2:21-24).*

“Jesus, Lover of my soul, Let me to thy bosom fly.” Shall we not so love the souls of others. *bhs*

There is tremendous relief in knowing his love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery can disillusion him about me. —J.I. Packer

To teach men that they possess the ability to turn from sin when they choose to do so is to hide the true extent of their need. —Iain Murray

From John Fawcett, *Christ Precious to Those Who Believe*

A pious man is more particularly grieved for the sins of that city, town, congregation, or family—to which he belongs. When Lot sojourned among the Sodomites, "that righteous man, dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day on account of their unlawful deeds." And the prophet Jeremiah most pathetically wished that his head were waters, and his eyes fountains of tears—that he might weep day and night, for the sins, and consequent calamities of his countrymen. In another place he thus addresses them, "But if you will not hear—my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, my eyes shall sorely weep, and run down with tears."

Individualism

How often in history has the question been propounded by some wishing to shun personal responsibility! May I not refer this matter to the magistrates? May I not consult the customs of my country? May I not seek the guidance of my priest and put on him the responsibility of interpreting this book? Nay, verily. Do thou interpret. It is God's letter to thy soul. Thy right of private judgment is the crown jewel of thy humanity. Sometimes even Baptists falter on this point. I have heard one of them excuse himself from an acknowledged duty of co-operation in missions, because his church was opposed to the mission work. Not even thy church can absolve thee from individual duty. Churches are time organizations and are punished in time. They do not stand before the great white throne of judgment. But thy soul shall appear before the judge. Well did our Lord know that there could be no evangelization of the world if ancestors, families, customs, government, commerce and priests could stand between the individual soul and God. Thy relation to God is paramount. His law takes precedence of all and swallows up all. In giving emphasis to this doctrine of individuality our Baptist fathers have suffered martyrdom at the hands of the heathen, the Romanist, the Greek, and the Protestant alike. —B. H. Carroll, *Baptists and their Doctrine*

Heaven above is softer blue, Earth around is sweeter green; Something
lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen: Birds with
gladder songs o'erflow, Flowers with deeper beauties shine, Since
I know, as now I know, I am His and He is mine.
(G.W. Robinson)

The course of this world is pervasive, keeping the captives quiet with the morphine of temporary pleasure at the expense of their eternal souls.
—Gloria Furman