

“It is no longer either dangerous or costly to be a Christian!”

“Some Christians have taken all the justice, judgment and hatred of sin out of the nature of God--and have nothing left but a soft god.”

“Let us start reading our Bibles with the thought that God means exactly what He says!”

--All from A. W. Tozer

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

XVII. Of the Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

Mal. 3:18; Pro. 12:26; Isa. 5:20; Gen. 18:23; Jer. 15:19; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 6:16; Rom. 1:17; Rom. 7:6; I John 2:29; I John 3:7; Rom. 6:18,22; I Cor. 11:32; Pro. 11:31; I Peter 4:17-18; I John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; John 3:36; Isa. 57:21; Ps. 10:4; Isa. 55:6-7; Pro. 14:32; Luke 16:25; John 8:21-24; Pro. 10:24; Luke 12:4-5; Luke 9:23-26; Ecc. 3:17; Matt. 7:13-14

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM—In Richwood

Services:

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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CONFIRMING SOULS

And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Acts 14:21-22

We need only look to social media to see how shallow and devoid of substance that much of religion in America has become. While I do not personally participate in any, others share with me messages that have caught their attention. What has arrested the attention of the faithful is the glaring ignorance of the Word of God and the authoritative way error is proudly displayed. One of the most prominent examples is the remark on the death of a friend that “heaven has gained a new angel.” Even a casual reading of the Bible will reveal that angels are not humans and humans do not become angels. Often the departed is pictured in some restored and updated version of things they enjoyed on earth or reunions with loved ones. All of this is often presented with no mention of Christ. What is evident is that their souls have not been confirmed in the truth of the Gospel as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. “Every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14)” seems to be having its way with multitudes.

To confirm the souls of the disciples was evidently a matter great importance to Paul and should be to us who minister the Word. It is to be pressed on those to whom we minister that attention to the Word and growth in grace and knowledge are means of true assurance of salvation. Sadly, the deception that a one-time experience is all that is required persists at the encouragement of false prophets and the preponderance of strange concepts floated

among the masses.

How serious was it to Paul? Paul had preached the Gospel in Iconium and then moved on to Lystra. It was there that the Jews from Iconium came and stoned him leaving him for dead. He rose up and went back into the city and the next day moved on to Derbe. One would have thought it best to avoid the place of such a violent attack. But, to him the need was pressing. Those new disciples needed to hear more and to be given the grounds for assurance of their salvation. They would themselves face similar persecution and needed what Paul had to endure it and so to persevere. Paul would later remind the Ephesians that they had been given Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teaching pastors for the purpose of building them up and anchoring them in the truth, the goal being unity in the faith.

To confirm means to further support, to reestablish, and to strengthen. It may well have been that Paul wanted to satisfy himself that they were genuinely born again. He further desired for them to know of the spiritual support that would be forthcoming from him and all saints with whom they would have to do. He would no doubt rehearse with them the Gospel he had preached and then seek to drive the anchor deeper into their hearts and minds that they ever be fixed upon Jesus, His grace and mercy. He would strengthen them in the sense that Joshua was directed to “Be strong and of

good courage.” He might have used words like those to the Corinthians: *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 1 Corinthians 16:13.* And, he would have referred them to the source of all strength as he did with the Ephesians: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Ephesians 6:10.*

Paul was not alone in the concern for confirming the souls of disciples. Peter, in anticipating his own death, expressed the necessity to continue the process of confirming. First, he wrote, *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; 2 Peter 1:13.* He went on to further explain his aim in writing, *Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. 2 Peter 1:15.* The concern of John for those to whom he had ministered precisely expressed concern as well in, *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 2 John 1:4, AND For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 3 John 1:3.*

In addition to confirmation, there are two additional elements in Paul’s ministry to these disciples – exhortation and expectation. That they continue in the faith would follow the pattern established earlier by the disciples after Pentecost. *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in*

breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42. He would have them be as the converts at Berea: *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Acts 17:11.* Paul would have them to be *...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; Ephesians 2:20*

As to expectation, the thought of necessity appears. Two things were assured. First, tribulation would surely follow. They had seen what had happened to Paul and were now told that they might expect the same. Jesus said, “...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Second, that it marked the way of entrance into the Kingdom (both as a present reality and a future hope) and that both were a must. They would tread the narrow way described by our Lord (Matthew 7:14) and the example left us by Him in going to the cross. It is the “must” of tribulation experienced that serves to separate us from this present world.

Peter would exhort that we are to begin with faith and build with ultimate love being on top. Doing so would assure fruitfulness “in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And then Peter sweetly adds: *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:11. bhs*

Why, then, do we pray? Because prayer is God’s ordained method for glorifying Himself by meeting our needs so that we can do His will and His work. “You do not have because you do not ask God” (James 4:2). The same God who ordains the end also ordains the means to the end, and prayer is an important part of that means. When God wants to accomplish something, He raises up a man or a woman, or perhaps a group of believers, to pray about that very matter, and through their prayers He accomplishes His work.

EXCERPTS FROM: *Encouragement for Today's Pastors: Help from the Puritans* by Joel Beeke and Terry D. Slachter

Some of us labor in situations where little growth is evident, numerical or spiritual. We are confronted with a painful lack of practical godliness and hunger for communion with God. We are confronted daily with unbelief, with apathy, with ignorance, with spiritual deadness, or with man-centered worldliness. Such signs of spiritual declension are enough to crush the soul of any servant of God and bring us to tears of sorrow and grief. Yet the call comes to us to “hold fast our profession,” even in an evil day. Though we have to labor in churches in which very few members “pray their pastors full so that they may preach them full” (as some old Dutch pastors used to say), we are called to “hold fast our profession.”

We are called to labor in the midst of the moral climate of a nation in which humanism is dominant, in which there is little regard for the holiness of God's name, the authority of His Word, or the demands of His law. Many are such fools as to say that there is no God (Ps. 14:1); there is no fear of God before their eyes (Ps. 36:1), and God is not in all their thoughts (Ps. 10:4). God's kingdom does not come as we would have it. His revealed will is contradicted without shame or embarrassment, even among professing Christians. When we are discouraged and ask with Isaiah, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” (Isa. 53:1), we are called to “hold fast our profession.”

Since the call to repentance is an absolute necessity in the proclamation of the gospel, we need to have a right understanding of the nature of repentance and its manifestation in genuine conversion. The following are eight essential characteristics of true biblical repentance: • change of mind • sorrow for sin • personal acknowledgment and confession of sin • turning away from sin • renunciation of self-righteousness or good works • turning to God • practical obedience • continuing and deepening work of repentance.

It is imperative for us to understand that these characteristics of genuine repentance will not necessarily appear in their fullest or most mature form at the moment of conversion but will continue to grow and deepen throughout the believer's life. It would be terribly misleading and destructive to suggest that true conversion requires that a person should attain a depth of repentance and faith that is rarely seen in the life of the most mature Christian. Jesus Himself said that even the faith of a mustard seed is sufficient to move mountains if it is genuine. At the time of conversion, a person's grasp of the heinous nature of sin may be meager, but it will be real. The depth of a new convert's brokenness may be slight compared to that of the mature believer, but it will most certainly be genuine. The final evidence that a person's repentance and faith are unto salvation will be that both these graces will continue to grow and deepen in his or her life through God's enduring work of sanctification.

--Paul Washer, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion*