

Tozer wrote, "Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God." He believed that the most revealing thing about a church is "her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech. She can never escape the self-disclosure of her witness concerning God."

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)*

XVI. Of the Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society,, and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Rom. 13:1-7; Deu. 16:18; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:23; Jer. 30:21; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13; I Tim. 2:1-4; Acts 5:29; Matt.28; Dan. 3:15-18; Dan. 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20; Matt. 23:10; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 19:16; Ps.72:11; Ps.2; Rom. 14:9-13

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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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### WISE AND SIMPLE

*For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. (Romans 16:19-20)*

Quite often, as we reach the end of an epistle, the writer becomes even more personal regarding greetings and some final instructions. In Romans 16 we find references to individuals either of mutual acquaintance or those being sent to them. Phebe may have been the very one who delivered this letter to the Romans. Priscilla and Aquila we know from references in the Book of Acts. Some may only be mentioned here. All were our brothers and sisters in Christ whom we shall fully know in Glory.

Also, included here are very direct instructions and commendations. I am reminded of the list of instructions that Paul invoked at the end of 1 Thessalonians 5. They were brief but full of application to the life of believers. Such seems to be the case here as Paul would warn concerning the enemy which was most certainly on the move. Paul recognized here the danger of those who cause division. He addressed this early with the Corinthians as did Jude in his epistle. Satan is a great imitator and endeavors to infiltrate wherever he can. Many succumb to the “wiles of the devil.” Paul addresses these issues in the two preceding verses here.

He reminds them very preciousely of that which they possess in Christ. The result had been that their faith and obedience was well known unto all. It is evident that the Roman church had much to commend it and so Paul

relates what he knew of them. He here repeats what he had said of them at the outset of the epistle: *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. (Romans 1:8)*. In repeating this we perhaps see Paul’s emphasis on faith and obedience. He had related early to them the burden of his own calling: *By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: (Romans 1:5-6)*. To Paul, the matter of faith and obedience were inseparable, and obedience was seen as being to the faith of God’s elect. Consider the following: *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Romans 6:16)*. And so, he lets them know of his joy in the report of their faith and obedience.

While we recognize the importance of growth in grace and knowledge, we realize that with many this easily slips into self-confidence and pride. So, he cautions them with two connected concepts. He would have them to be both wise and simple. As to wisdom, we tend to think of accumulated knowledge. The wisdom here spoken of is not the wisdom of the world (even biblical knowledge can be handled after the way of the world) but speaks rather of that

spiritual wisdom to be desired. It may be that true wisdom reflects one's consideration of what he does not know but subjects him to the glory of God. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)*. We desire true wisdom that we may serve Him well.

Our Lord's words were: *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (Matthew 10:16)*. Paul seems to capture that thought here. Wisdom enables us to determine that which is evil, even the most subtle forms of it. I am often reminded of Paul's words to the Corinthians on deception: *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:3)*.

The word simple here is understood to be "innocent." It is certain that to abstain from the very appearance of evil is in order. But it may also include the idea of staying away from it in the sense of "when in doubt, don't." Elsewhere Paul wrote: *Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. (1 Corinthians 14:20)*. A little child will cling to the safety of its mother when dealing with the unfamiliar. Likewise, if it does not have the image and superscription of Christ thereon, we cling to Him. Matthew Henry wrote, "That is a wisely simple man that knows not how to do anything against the truth." When David would go against the giant, he openly stated that he was coming

in the name of the Lord. "David did not forget to ascribe all the glory to God ... but neither did he forget to sling the stone! Conversely, here, in Rom 16:17-20 Paul exhorts those whom he addresses to do the following: watch out ... avoid ... obey ... be wise ... and be innocent. In other words, Shoulder your responsibility! But he follows this up immediately by emphasizing that if there is going to be a victory—and yes, there will be one—it is God, he alone, who will achieve it:" – Hendriksen.

The conjunction in verse 20 connects this thought to another important aspect of the Christian walk of faith and obedience. When Joshua would clearly manifest the hand of the Lord in the conquest of some kings, he had the captains come forth and put their feet on the necks of those kings. So, is the thought here. We read the prophecy in, *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)*. The thought of bruising here is of crushing to pieces. Important for us to notice is that while the God of peace shall do it, it will be "under your feet shortly." Satan will be crushed; it will be under your feet; it will begin as soon as we attend to the Word of God serving our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the God of Peace, He is the God of conquest and of complete salvation. As to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is Jesus our Savior. But He is Lord and our submission to Him as Lord acknowledges the His claim upon us as having redeemed us and provided us with such grace as to obey and to serve. Let us be both wise and simple. *bhs*

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Admiration may be the highest of pleasures, and particularly when we marvel at the life, death, and triumph of Jesus. The treasures of who he is, what he has done, and what he will do are countless. We were made for this: not just to trust and obey God, but to know him, and enjoy him, in Jesus. The joys of knowing Jesus are unsurpassed even now—and they will endure, and only deepen and develop, for all eternity to come. – David Mathis, *Rich Wounds*

Suppose that back in 1945,

Jesus had asked me if I deserved to be saved. Of course, I didn't deserve it. I didn't deserve it then, and I haven't deserved it since! I trusted Him, and in His mercy, He didn't give me what I did deserve: judgment. And in His grace, He gave me what I didn't deserve: salvation! "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14). Christ is our Light and we trust Him; He is our Leader, and we follow Him; He is our Life and we grow in Him and reveal Him to this dark world. – Warren Wiersbe, *He Walks With Me: Enjoying the Abiding Presence of God*

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Three of the psalms begin with why: "Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?" (10:1); "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?" (22:1); "O God, why do you cast us off forever? Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?" (74:1). But each of those psalms ends on a note of trust in God. These psalmists didn't allow their whys to drag on or to take root and grow into accusations against God. Their whys were really cries of anguish, a natural reaction to pain. Though we should never be demanding, we may and should ask God to enable us to understand what He's teaching us through a particular experience. But even here, we must trust that He's working in these experiences for our good, even when we recognize no beneficial results. We must learn to trust God when He doesn't tell us why and we don't understand what He's doing. We'll never fully understand. In Paul's doxology at the end of Romans 11, he exclaims in amazement, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (verse 33). God's wisdom is fathomless, His decisions unsearchable, His methods mysterious and untraceable. No one has ever understood His mind, let alone advised Him on the proper course of action. We step over a moral line when we arrogantly demand that God tell us what He is doing in a particular event or circumstance. This is futile and even sinful, for we simply cannot search out the reasons behind His decisions or trace out the ways by which He brings those decisions to pass. We must come to truly accept that God's ways are simply beyond us. This may seem like an intellectual cop-out, a refusal to deal with life's tough issues. In fact, it's just the opposite. It's a surrender to the truth about God and our circumstances as revealed by God Himself in His inspired Word. –Jerry Bridges, *Thirty-one Days Toward Trusting God*.

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UPON A LIFE I DID NOT LIVE, UPON A DEATH I DID NOT DIE—UPON ANOTHER'S LIFE,  
ANOTHER'S DEATH, I STAKE MY WHOLE ETERNITY! HORATIUS BONAR