

My prayers—whether I pray, how much I pray, about what I pray—reveal my priorities. And they reveal how much I really think I need God, or whether I am, deep down, in fact self-assured and self-righteous. —Alistair Begg

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)

III. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

Gen.1:27; Gen.1:31; Ecc.7:29; Acts 17:26-29; Gen.2:16-17; Gen.3:6-24; Rom. 5:12; Rom.5:15-19; Ps.51:5; Rom.8:7; Isa.53:6; Gen.6:12; Rom.3:9-18; Eph.2:1-3; Rom.1:18,32; Rom.2:1-16; Gal.3:10; Matt. 20:15; Ezek. 18:19-20; Rom.1:20; Rom.3:19; Gal. 3:22.

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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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DEALING WITH SUDDEN FEAR

Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. Proverbs 3:25-26)

A few short months ago we were arising each day with the expectation that things would continue as they always had. Then came the news, sketchy at first, but then bursting on to the headlines, that we had been invaded by a mysterious virus. Suddenly fear spread across the country and we have not been the same since. As we have learned more and more, we have also observed many and varied reactions. They range from those who are terrified at the danger to those who seem to think themselves immune from any effects.

While this was emerging another evidence of the depravity of man and the effects of restraints removed came to our attention. Racial tensions came to a head in a most horrible manner. We were made to witness a man being needlessly murdered and an extreme reaction to it. As we view these things from a purely human perspective, we may understand the issues involved and even sympathize with some of the thought. But the sudden eruption of violence, lawlessness and vulgarity revealed that their thoughts were not of God and His righteousness. As we witness the destruction, and the fact that it is being justified by government leaders, we become fearful of what the outcome may be. A dear brother recently posed the question to me, “Can America Survive?” I might add a question. Should we expect America to survive when the pursuit of sin and godlessness has been so prevalent for so long? The writer of Proverbs expressed

elsewhere that, “Where there is no vision, the people perish...”

Many true believers were not taken by surprise at this sudden turn of events. It has been a wonder for some time to us that God had not come down hard on a nation which has condoned such wickedness as we have seen. We need not call them out, but the atrocities being openly committed in our day are dealt with in scripture. Perhaps, there has been a tendency to read of those things as strange events of the past that are never to be repeated. These sins, the expression of the nature of fallen man, may take on differing forms, but the essence is the same. In that God, in His Word, and by His Son, and by the witness of the Holy Spirit in those who believe Him bears witness against such evil, we who love the Lord will not go unnoticed by these God-haters. Apart from Him, His mercy and His grace, there is a far greater threat to us than that of any virus.

How precious that we are given such wonderful assurance as is provided in this text. How often do we read the words in one form or another: “Fear not!” Here is another. We are bidden, yea mandated to, be not afraid. We all have experienced some form of sudden fear. We have known what it is to have peace shattered at some frightening prospect. It may have been life threatening or unfounded, but the source of sudden fear, nonetheless. We may be left to question, what now, or where do we go from here?

The context of these words is the valuation that is to be given to wisdom and understanding. We do well to study these early chapters of Proverbs. Wisdom and understanding are first attributed to the LORD. They are witnessed in all the mighty works of God and such testify to all His being and existence. Furthermore, He continues in all things to manifest that He is in control and the world continues to hold Him in contempt. Paul wrote of wisdom to us in this way: *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1 Corinthians 1:30)*. This is in evidence to the writer of Proverbs in that he personifies wisdom. So, in v. 22 of this chapter the writer declares of wisdom and understanding that: "So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck."

We also note in the preceding verses that the possessors of wisdom and understanding (Christ) shall walk in the way (the way of the cross) safely and "thy foot shall not stumble." This is not to be presumed upon – it is truth apprehended by faith in the Lamb of God. In the preceding verse we read: *When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. (Proverbs 3:24)*. This is not an offer; it is a declaration of sovereign accomplishment. We love the "thou shalt" of the scriptures. Thus, building upon this foundation, we are given reason not to be afraid and of what. Sudden fear shall not daunt the people of God for they know that He is faithful that promised and that He is constant in the application of grace. We are witnessing the "desolation of wicked men" even as we write.

We rejoice in the knowledge that while they may kill the body, the planting of the Lord shall never be made desolate.

The best of reasons is given as to why we must not be afraid. The Lord places Himself before the eyes of our faith revealing that the enemy would have to destroy Him in order to destroy us and we know that can never be. That which was accomplished at Calvary stands and every foe was forever vanquished there just as surely as the souls of believers have been forever secured. He is able to "keep you from falling."

It is evident that God is judging the land – He has given them up. Charles Spurgeon wrote: When God is abroad in judgments, He would not have His people alarmed. He has not come forth to harm, but to defend the righteous. We who enjoy the presence of God ought to display presence of mind. Since the Lord Himself may suddenly come, we ought not to be surprised by anything sudden. Serenity under the rush and roar of unexpected evils is a precious gift of Divine love."

O that we might avail ourselves of the confidence that is the Lord Himself and that we might take courage as the Word of God bids us to do. After all, this is what is expected of the world and the enemies of God. Even the things we are witnessing, as horrible as they seem, will serve the purpose of God in the work of redemption. We are assured that those who even now are shaking the fists defiantly at God will in one way or another bow their knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. In all that we do, "May Jesus Christ be Praised." *bhs*

Servants with Scarred Hands

When you meet the kind of Christians who trust God as their faithful Creator, you will know it. Such saints have a mark they cannot hide. Not only do they walk through suffering with an abiding peace in Jesus; they also walk through suffering with an eye

toward others: "Let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."

Having entrusted their fragile souls to the safekeeping of a faithful Creator, they have found the courage to pick up the shattered pieces of their lives, hand them to Jesus, and trust that he is still able to take what is broken and use it to nourish multitudes. They may speak comfort with a tremble in their voice, or reach out to another with scarred hands, or serve with wounds that cannot be seen and cannot be fully healed in this life. But they still speak, still reach, still serve, bringing the treasure of God to others in a jar of clay.

Why? Because the Creator of the stars keeps them as the apple of his eye. Because the Architect of the earth counts their every hair. Because the Maker of the mountains holds their souls in the hollow of his hand. And with him they are safe.

--Scott Hubbard

IT ALWAYS ISSUES IN THE FOLLOWING: (Al Martin)

"First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also--I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds." Acts 26:20

Conversion begins with a radical turning to God in repentance that issues in a lifetime of living out the implications of that turning, by performing deeds in keeping with that repentance.

"They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath." 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

This describes the conversion of the Thessalonians as consisting in a radical turning to God from idols, issuing in a life of bond-service to the living God, and an eager waiting for the completion of salvation to be bestowed at the return of Jesus.

If any professed conversion is indeed God's saving work, it always issues in the following:

- a life of growing communion with Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 3:8-10);
- a life of increasing conformity to Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18);
- a life of continuous abiding in Christ (John 15:1-11);
- and a life of principled obedience to Christ (John 14:21, 1 John 2:3-4).

"Blessed are the merciful." In Christ we see mercy personified. It was mercy to poor lost sinners which caused the Son of God to exchange the glory of Heaven—for the shame of earth. It was mercy, wondrous and matchless, which took Him to the Cross, there to be made a curse for His people. So it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). He still exercises mercy to us as our "merciful and faithful High Priest" (Heb. 2:17). So also we are to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21), because He will show us mercy in "that Day" (2 Tim. 1:18). --Arthur W. Pink