

There are some of us old-fashioned Christians, who still believe that a loving God creates dark nights as well as bright noon-days; that he not only permits trouble, but sometimes sends troubles on his own children for their spiritual profit. — Theodore Cuyler

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)

I. Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter, that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

II Tim. 3:16-17; II Tim. 3:15; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 2:12; Phil. 3:16; I John 4:1

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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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FAITH DEFINED AND AFFIRMED

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Hebrews 11:1-3)

Peter wrote that “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious...” The preciousness of Christ is a continuing sense brought by faith to the life of a believer. The word “precious” means honor or respect. “The believers are honored by God because of Christ who is precious to Him (BNTC).” Indeed, then in every respect He is precious. That being said, the vehicle through which that preciousness is brought is also precious. Peter referred to the obtaining of “like precious faith” in the second epistle. It is well that we examine and reflect upon that which is declared to us in our text.

This is a familiar text to many of us and in the interest of precision we like to give definition to the terms we use. We are also given to being concise with those definitions and so, Hebrews 11:1 is brief and easy to remember. Yet, we do well to pause and to meditate on elements of such definitions and this we will endeavor to do. We would pause here to consider such things as “substance” and “evidence” and then to affirmation of those things in the witness of the elders.

Those of us who love and study the teachings of John Gill are familiar with the way that he often begins his comments. He often submits a list of things the text does not say. Sometimes that becomes tedious, but in this case, it is well advised. There are many considerations of faith to be found in the Word

of God that are worthy of study but are not what is indicated to us here. In the things that follow here I will paraphrase Kistemaker from the BNTC. When the Apostle Paul began to preach, it was not forgotten what he had been before. What they heard was that he was now preaching the faith he once sought to destroy (Galatians 1:23). In this case, the faith was as a confession and not the meaning of what the writer of Hebrews would convey.

The evangelists who wrote the Gospels saw Jesus Christ as the object of faith. Consider, *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:31)*. We observe in the book of Acts that the early Christians displayed personal faith in Jesus Christ.

There is an “appropriating faith” to be observed in the writings of Paul. That is, the claiming of salvation in Jesus Christ. Paul sees the sinner put right with God through faith: *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (Romans 3:22)*. This is consistent with the well-known statement: “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”

The writer of Hebrews certainly endorses all these various aspects of faith. It is that he places the concept of faith here in the context of all

that follows in the eleventh of Hebrews. This chapter is often referred to as the “Faith chapter” and those considered in it as the “heroes of the faith.” What is to be noted is that they had in common an unwavering confidence in God, and they acted on that faith. Kistemaker observed that “For the author, faith is adhering to the promises of God, depending on the Word of God, and remaining faithful to the Son of God.”

These first three verses of chapter 11 proceed directly from the last two verses of the preceding chapter: *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:38-39)*. This then is saving faith in the sense that it is the manifestation of salvation in the believer. Consider the following from Robert Hawker: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. There is somewhat very striking in this account of faith, as given by the Holy Ghost himself. It is called by him a substance, meaning; that the object the soul resteth on being substantially formed in the mind; and which, so realizeth that object to view, as for the mind to become as perfectly assured of its existence and reality, as though seen.”

Other translations use the terms “assurance” and “conviction” for substance and evidence. These terms are not inconsistent with the meaning of the words. Again, from Kistemaker, Assurance -- What is true faith? In 1563 a German theology professor, Zacharias Ursinus, formulated his personal faith: True faith—created in me by the Holy Spirit through the

gospel—is not only a knowledge and conviction that everything that God reveals in his Word is true, but also a deep-rooted assurance that not only others, but I too, have had my sins forgiven, have been made forever right with God, and have been granted salvation. These are gifts of sheer grace earned for us by Christ.” The word here translated “substance” refers to that which is placed under, a foundation, and that which has actual existence (Thayer). The word for “evidence” is proof or conviction. John Gill called it a “firm persuasion of the power, faithfulness, and love of God in Christ, and of interest in all special blessings.” He went on to observe that “the things hoped for by the Old Testament saints were Christ, and eternal glory and happiness; and by the New Testament ones, more grace, perseverance in it, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Now faith is the ‘substance’ of these things.”

Faith provides the evidence of things done in eternity, the creation, things done in the nearer past, of the work of Christ here, and His continuing work of intercession and ruling well. This is not mere suggestion as to the truth of them; it is seeing the unseen and being convicted that they are ours. We do not see things put under His feet, but we see Jesus high and lifted up and we are firmly convinced of His success. Faith is the evidence that it is so.

May we ever be looking by such faith to Him. May we sense such a firm foundation as is given us. May we ever sing with conviction, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.” Substance and evidence sustain us and establishes us in the hope that is within with Godly fear. *bhs*

Without a sincere and loving attachment to the Author of eternal salvation, whatever works of morality we may perform, our obedience will be materially and essentially defective, as not flowing from a proper principle. ~John Fawcett

“LOVE GOD, AND LIVE AS YOU PLEASE.”

This was the response of Augustine when he was asked what is the secret to the Christian life. This was also the response of Martin Luther when he was asked to cite his rule of life.*

Everyone except those who are physically confined or restrained endeavors to live the rule “Live as you please.” The difference between us is the object of our love. For we are motivated to live by whom we love. This is true for both “lovers of themselves” (2 Timothy 3:2) and “lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4). The first will have “pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:12). The second will imitate Jesus Christ when He said of His Father, “I always do those things that please Him” (John 8:29). Nevertheless, many religious folks become upset when Christians confess to live by the rule “Love God, and live as you please.” They appear to skip over the first part of that rule – which is the most important part to a Christian – and therefore misunderstand or misapply the second.

Some have told me, “Your rule lets you do what you want to do.”

O, how I wish I could do what I want to do! I want to serve the God I love completely and perfectly. I am grieved when I do not (see Romans 7:15ff).

Some have told me, “Your rule gives you a license to sin.”

To the contrary, a license to sin belongs to those who hate God and love themselves. Lovers of God depart from sin to godliness because they have, as it were, a license to righteousness. Lovers of God obey His Word when it says, “You who love Jehovah, hate evil!” (Psalm 97:10). Lovers of God are compelled by their love to “no longer ... live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (1 Peter 4:2) and to “live according to God in the spirit” (v.6). Lovers of God live so as to be “imitators of God as dear children” (Ephesians 5:1), and to be holy and perfect because He is (1 Peter 1:15f; Matthew 5:48), and to live according to the example of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:21).

Lovers of God are not legalists motivated by the desire to live in a way that obtains justification or sanctification through keeping the law. Nor are lovers of God mercenaries motivated by the desire to live so as to earn rewards from God.

Rather, lovers of God are motivated to live according to God’s love to us and our love to Him.

And, as Augustine also said, “To profess to love God while leading an unholy life is the worst of falsehoods.” – Daniel E. Parks

It is the great support and solace of the saints in all the distresses that befall them here, that there is a wise Spirit sitting in all the wheels of motion, and governing the most eccentric creatures, and their most pernicious designs, to blessed and happy issues. –John Flavel

DOING MORE. NEVER talk of what you have done, but go on to something else. An officer rode up to his general, and said, “Sir, we have taken two guns from the enemy.” “It is well,” said the general, “take two more.” –C. H. Spurgeon