

REDEEMING THE TIME

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

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SUMMER 2021

A toppled and vandalized statue of George Washington in Portland

(reproduced as evidence)

"AMERICA'S ORIGINAL SIN"?

BY BRAD K. GSELL

THE MASSIVE RIOTING, destruction of property, looting, arson, and physical violence which followed the death of George Floyd last year was largely ignored by the left, or excused. Reporters stood in front of intensive blazes and called them "mostly peaceful protests." Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) called the Portland riots a "myth," the irrefutable evidence notwithstanding.

Many statues of America's heroes were defaced or destroyed. This quickly morphed from what we were told over the last few years was a movement to remove symbols of the Confederacy. Now, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln were to be canceled from our vision, erased from our memories, and cut out of our history. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) dismissed the destruction by saying: "I don't care that much about statues.... People will do what they do."

It did not stop there. Francis Scott Key's statue in San Francisco was toppled, and the University of Pennsylvania announced the removal of the historic statue of the Rev. George Whitefield (famous colonial preacher of the Great Awakening). The University was started on the grounds where Whitefield held some of his largest revival meetings in Philadelphia.

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MACHEN REVISITED

His writings speak to the controversies in recent decades in some Reformed circles concerning Justification by Faith ALONE.

BY ROBERT W. ANDERSON

In the early 20th century, a global defection from scriptural, supernatural Christianity was raging in the mainline denominations. J. Gresham Machen, a minister and theological professor in the Presbyterian Church, USA, was a bellwether voice for God, as Luther and Calvin had been in the 16th century.

Machen sought to stem the pandemic with a heartfelt, scholarly defense of the essential truths of the historic Christian faith. We love him for his life and testimony.

While recently re-reading Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*, my attention was caught by something he wrote. It brought to mind the issues that led to the separation of Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church, from the Bible Presbyterian Synod.

Tolerance and intolerance

In his first chapter, "Doctrine," Machen wrote about Paul's tolerance and intolerance: "Paul certainly was not indifferent to doctrine; on the contrary, doctrine was the very basis of his life. His devotion to doctrine did not ... make him incapable of

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Massive destruction in Minneapolis



The Scottish Reformation

PART 3

BY MARK W. EVANS

John Knox's Call to the Ministry

Scotland in the 16th century was a land subservient to ecclesiastical tyranny. Rome's clergy, composed of the pope, priests, monks, friars, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and other unbiblical potentates, were in control of church and state. They used their unscriptural offices to funnel wealth into the papal coffers and to satisfy their own carnal appetites and ambitions. The greatest evil they perpetrated had to do with the eternal soul. Their unbiblical corruptions of Christian doctrine enslaved souls to a religion of empty rituals and superstitious duties. Only faith in Jesus Christ and His saving work can set a sinner free. When the Bible was translated into a known language, and reached the oppressed land, Rome's chains began to fall off.

The gracious and sovereign work of God in Scotland began early. There is evidence of Biblical Christianity reaching the barbaric land as early as the time of the Roman Empire. Ecclesiastical Rome did not come into power until the 12th and 13th centuries. There was likely a remnant of Biblical faith still in the land when John Wycliffe's followers entered the country with a translation of the Scriptures. John Resby, a disciple of

Wycliffe, was burned at the stake in 1406 or 1407. He was declared a heretic for teaching that "the Pope was not Christ's Vicar, and that he was not Pope if he was a man of wicked life."¹ A follower of John Hus, Paul Crawar, was burned at the stake in 1431. He perished in the flames because he taught that "the mass was a worship of superstition."² Martin Luther's writ-

The Holy Spirit enabled John Knox to bow before his Lord and Redeemer to give himself to the preaching of God's Word and to the shepherding of God's flock. By the Lord's grace, he eventually witnessed the overthrow of Rome's corrupt doctrines, her heinous immorality, idolatrous worship, and hellish persecution.

ings and William Tyndale's New Testament also had an impact. J.A. Wylie wrote, "When the New Testament entered, a ray from heaven had penetrated the night that brooded over the country. Its Reformation had begun. The Bible was the only Reformer then possible in Scotland."³ Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart and nu-

merous others were burned at the stake for the crime of proclaiming the truths of God's Word. Their deaths were not in vain.

George Wishart's follower John Knox matured and prospered in the knowledge of God's truth. The student determined to follow his teacher unto death. However, the humble servant replied: "Nay, return to your bairnes (meaning pupils), and God bless you: one is sufficient for a sacrifice."⁴

Within three months following Wishart's death, the cruel persecutor, Cardinal Beaton, was assassinated. The pope's clergy were filled with a murderous rage. John Knox was persuaded to seek refuge in the castle of St. Andrews to continue teaching and catechizing his students. There were others as well who listened and benefited from the future Reformer's instruction. John Rough, a Protestant preacher, had also found shelter in the castle. He conducted worship services and ministered to the little flock. His many duties and obligations became overwhelming, and he began to consider the need of an assistant. He was convinced that John Knox should become a Gospel minister. Knox's Biblical teachings and exhortations had so edified Rough's congregation that they desired to have him as their pastor. Knox trembled at such a thought. He believed that he had no call to this solemn duty. John Rough and the flock disagreed.

Church historian Thomas M'Crie wrote: "[O]n a day fixed for the purpose, Rough preached a sermon on the election of ministers, in which he declared the power which a congregation, however small, had over any one in whom they perceived gifts suited to the office, and how dangerous it was for such a person to reject a call of those who desired instruction. Sermon being ended, the preacher turned to Knox, who was present, and addressed him in these words: 'Brother, you shall not be offended, although I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those that are

There are those who believe that the Lord cannot bring a true revival to our country today. The hour is too late, and the sins are too dark. Yet, the Word of God teaches that our King of kings and Lord of lords has “all power in heaven and in earth.”

here present, which is this: In the name of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of all that presently call you by my mouth, I charge you that you refuse not this holy vocation, but as you tender the glory of God, the increase of Christ's kingdom, the edification of our brethren, and the comfort of me, whom you understand well enough to be oppressed by the multitude of labors, that you take upon you the public office and charge of preaching, even as you look to avoid God's heavy displeasure, and desire that he shall multiply his graces unto you.' Then addressing himself to the congregation, he said, 'Was not this your charge unto me! and do ye not approve this vocation?' They all answered, 'It was; and we approve it.'"⁵

REDEEMING THE TIME

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Knox burst into tears. John Rough wrote: "His countenance and behavior from that day, till the day that he was compelled to present himself in the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart; for no man saw sign of mirth from him, neither had he pleasure to accompany any man for many days together."⁶

The Holy Spirit enabled John Knox to bow before his Lord and Redeemer to give himself to the preaching of God's Word and to the shepherding of God's flock. By the Lord's grace, he eventually witnessed the overthrow of Rome's corrupt doctrines, her heinous immorality, idolatrous worship, and hellish persecution. In the face of the papacy's wealth, human power, earthly splendor, bigoted followers, fiery stakes, torture chambers, dungeons and unmentionable cruelties, Christ built His Church, and the gates of hell did not prevail against it. There are those who believe that the Lord cannot bring a true revival to our country today. The hour is too late, and the sins are too dark. Yet, the Word of God teaches that our King of kings and Lord of lords has "all power in heaven and in earth." The Prophet Habakkuk prayed: "O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2). •

¹J.A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, volume III (London: Cassell and Company, n.d. [originally published, 1878]), p. 467.

²*Ibid.*, p. 468.

³*Ibid.*, p. 469.

⁴Thomas M'Crie, *The Life of John Knox* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976), p. 21.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 24,25.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 25.



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Present With the Lord

REV. DAVID JALALUDDIN, esteemed minister in Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church, went to be with his Savior on March 19, 2021. He was a devoted follower of Christ.

He is survived by his wife, Laveenus, a son, four daughters, and two sisters. He was born in 1937 in Gilwala Surgodha, Pakistan, a town established by his grandfather. The family had a farm and grew a number of crops in the area.



After studying botany, and to be a lab technician, he was asked to head the Laboratory Department at the United Christian Hospital in Lahore, Pakistan.

Seeking a better life for his family, the Jalaluddins moved to Libya, where David served as a lab technician and began his ministry. Because Libya was an Islamic country, the believers had to worship in secret at various locations. After eight years, the government forced him and other believers to leave the country immediately, when he was accused of preaching the gospel.

In search of religious liberty, and a future for his children, the family moved to the United States in 1982. He began by operating a car wash in Delaware, and later managing a motel in Virginia.

They then moved to Pennsylvania, where he studied to gain his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Theology degrees. At the time of his death, he was the pastor of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Abington, PA. He preached until a month before his homegoing.

Pastor Jalaluddin was active in evangelism, and was much loved by his congregation. He had an undying commitment to the cause of Christ. •

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).



TRUSTING GOD IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY

This message was delivered to the El Jordan Evangelical Union Church in Iquitos, Peru, on Sunday evening, April 25, 2021, via Zoom. Many from all over South America joined the service remotely. The Rev. Carlos Alvarez is pastor of the church. Iquitos is located along the Amazon River, and has been hit severely with COVID-19. A shortage of doctors, medicine, facilities, and so forth, made the situation even worse.

BY BRAD K. GSELL

It is so good to be with you this evening. My wife, Sheila, and I had the privilege of visiting your church on a Sunday afternoon when we were in Iquitos in 2018. What a nice visit it was, seeing your beautiful city. It was the first time we had ever seen the Nanay and Amazon Rivers.

But, most of all, it was a blessing to be with fellow believers in Christ. The Lord gave us the privilege of meeting and becoming friends with Pastor Alvarez in Chile in 2020 at the 20th World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches. We also cherish our friendship with Pastors Juan Hoyos and Victor Montejó, with whom we have fellowshiped at various meetings of the ICCC.

We want you to know that we have been praying specifically for you and the people of Iquitos with the terrible suffering that has descended on the world with the outbreak of COVID-19. We grieved to hear of the suffering of you, your friends and your families, and the lack of medical supplies and doctors. Sadly, there is much suffering all over the world due to this pandemic.

Sheila and I had the virus a few months ago, but praise the Lord that He brought us through it with no medicine and no lasting effects that we know of. However, many have not been so fortunate.

Why does God allow us to suffer and how should we respond?

We may ask why God allows us to go through such suffering. Why, when I am trying to live my life according to God's Word, and to help others? Why must God allow me to have pain, and illness, and stress, and turmoil? Why does He allow someone I love to die at a young age?

God has given us many examples in His Word of those who have suffered great things, and their response to these sufferings.

When we think of Job, in the Old Testament, our attention is immediately drawn to his sufferings. In one

day, Job receives word that his livestock, his servants, and his children have died. He has horrible sores, and his wife urges him to "curse God and die."

His so-called friends come and tell him that he must have sinned terribly against God, for these things to have happened, and that his sons probably did something to deserve to die.

Here was Job, a man who the Bible says was "upright," and was faithful in obeying and serving God. Yet he suffered all of these terrible offenses. For a time Job wished he had never been born. He went from being very prosperous, to losing virtually everything.

Job finally rebuked his friends for their unfair and wrong words to him. He didn't want to hear their words of condemnation and discouragement anymore. Beginning in Job 13:13, he says to them: "Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will."

But, in verses 15-16, Job shows that these terrible calamities had not shaken his faith in God's faithfulness and mercy. Job cried out: "Though he [God] slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him."

In verse 18 he continues: "Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified." What faith this man Job had in God!

In chapter 19:25-26, Job is looking in great faith to the future. He declares: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." What a wonderful example Job is for us as he places his hope and trust in the coming of the Lord to take all believers!

In the days of the Lord Jesus' ministry on this earth, there were those similar to Job's friends. In John 9:1-3 we read: "And as Jesus passed by, he

saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” We may not know why hardship and affliction come our way, but we can be sure that it so “the works of God should be made manifest” in us!

We also think about the Apostle Paul in the New Testament

In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, Paul gives a great list of just some of the sufferings that he had endured. He writes: “in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”

Paul was not just seeking pity, and he was not complaining. Rather, in verse 30, he writes: “If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.” And, in verse 31, he writes that “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... is blessed for evermore.”

On top of all these sufferings which Paul had endured, he wrote in Galatians 4:13: “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the

gospel unto you at the first.” He had an ongoing physical affliction. In another place, he called it his “thorn in the flesh.”

Yet this did not shake Paul’s faith. In fact it made it more sure and strong. Paul wrote in Romans 8:35-39: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to

separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Like Job, Paul looked forward to that great day when he would be with the Lord in heaven. He wrote in Romans 8:18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”

Philippians 4:11 tells us: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” This can be very difficult. How can we be content when we are hurting or are sick? Yet, our comfort and reliance comes from God alone. Like Job, can we say, “Though he [God] slay me, yet will I trust in him”?

Christian Compassion

When we see others suffering, the child of God should have genuine compassion. Our natural human tendency is to be selfish and to think only about ourselves. Yet, Paul says in Philippians 2:4: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Paul tells the Corinthians, “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul writes: “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation....” Here Paul shows that our true reliance, our true help, our true comfort is given to us by God.

But, he continues in verse 4 that we are not to just selfishly receive God’s comfort. No! He says: “that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

Paul continues in verse 7: “And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.” When we suffer, we are comforted of God, but we

also should reach out to comfort those who are also suffering.

How we respond to our sufferings can be used of God in a mighty way to show Christian compassion and to give the life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are not only suffering, but are lost in their sins.

The Apostle Paul was a tremendous witness for Christ. He tells the Philippians, in chapter 4:4 of his book to them: “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice”! Paul was not having an easy life and thoughtlessly telling them to be happy. No! He was writing this epistle from pris-

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on, in very bad conditions. Nonetheless, in verse 10, he writes: “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly”!

What a testimony. He was suffering in prison, yet he was thinking of OTHERS first. Instead of feeling sorry for himself, he was concerned with

the spiritual welfare of the churches. Instead of being angry that God had allowed him to be sitting in jail, he was rejoicing in God’s goodness. Oh, may we have this kind of faith and trust in God!

Our Glorious Future

The Apostle John gives us the wonderful promise in Revelation 21:4-5 that: “God shall wipe away all

tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”

Oh, what a glorious day that will be! In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul tells us that we will be raised from the grave in our same bodies, but they shall be glorified bodies, and we will live forever in heaven with our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

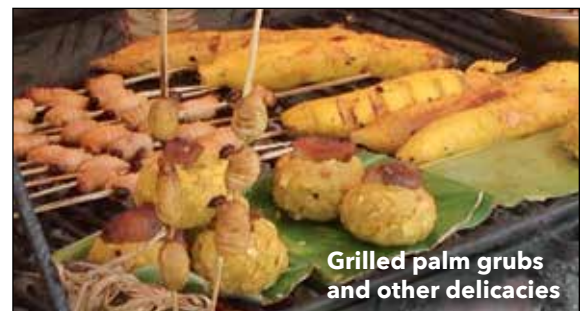
We want you to know that we have been praying for you throughout this past year, as have brethren from around the world. Please remember our brethren in your prayers as well. Right now, many are suffering and dying of COVID in Africa, and numerous other places in the world. May we take to heart the words of the Apostle Paul, in Galatians 6:2: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” •



The Rev. Brad Gsell is a minister of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, NC, and President of the International Council of Christian Churches and of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.



The confluence of the Nanay and Amazon Rivers in Iquitos



Grilled palm grubs and other delicacies



Main means of transportation in Iquitos

“THE WASTING OF THE EVANGELICAL MIND”

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Never missing an opportunity to attack Christian evangelicals, *The New Yorker* carried an editorial in its March 4, 2021, “Daily Comment” section entitled “The Wasting of the Evangelical Mind.” Written by Michael Luo, editor of *newyorker.com*, the article’s subtitle signals what is to follow: “The peculiarities of how American Christianity took shape help explain believers’ vulnerability to conspiratorial thinking and misinformation.”

Luo begins by taking us to the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, and quoting from the prayers of a “long-haired man in a red ski cap,” and from perhaps the most colorful person of the day — the much-publicized “QAnon Shaman,” wearing a fur hat and bull horns.

We always seek to be careful not to misrepresent an author’s intentions, yet Luo clearly seeks to make these Capitol outlaws representative of all evangelicals. He writes: “The intermingling of religious faith, conspiratorial thinking, and midguided nationalism on display at the Capitol offered perhaps the most unequivocal evidence yet of the American church’s role in bringing the country to this dangerous moment.”

Before getting through the second paragraph, the author has already set the stage for the reader to begin from the assumption that evangelicalism and “dangerous” ignorance go hand in hand. The fact that evangelicals overwhelmingly and publicly opposed those who broke into the Capitol building

apparently was not enough to interrupt the narrative Luo was set on presenting.

Historic Christian Scholarship

Luo does state correctly that, throughout early American history, Christians placed a strong emphasis on learning. The minister was nearly always the most educated man in town. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and many other schools were started by Christians, largely for the purpose of producing an educated clergy.

Many of the clergy were fluent in Greek, Hebrew, Latin and other languages. They had vast knowledge of the classics and the teaching of the ancient philosophers. Many were also proficient in the law, and the sciences.

Luo marks the beginning of the decline in evangelical scholarship to the Great Awakening in the 18th century and the Second Great Awakening in the 19th.

Particularly the first Great Awakening was marked by revivalism — in opposition to what some saw as a “dead orthodoxy.” However, to say that it was an anti-intellectual movement is far from the truth. New Side (revivalist) Presbyterian William Tennant established the Log College near Neshaminy, Pennsylvania. This school led to the eventual formation of the College of New Jersey, known as Princeton University today. Jonathan Edwards, one of the most erudite scholars of the time, became the president of this college, followed by a long train of well-educated leaders.

Many New Side (as well as Old Side) churches established classical schools, with the well-educated pastors leading them, and demanding rigorous academic standards. Some of America’s finest leaders attended such schools.

Education of the people was a principle deeply held by Protestantism from its beginning. No longer would the church keep people in ignorance. The reading and interpretation of the Scriptures and the understanding of truth ceased to be the sole province of the “church” and its priests. Protestantism presented a rational religion based on real events in history — not one based on mysticism and superstition.

However, this rational Christianity was not just a matter of academic acumen. The true child of God is instructed to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). But, he is also commanded: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [conduct]” (1 Peter 1:15). He must both know the Scriptures AND live his life according to the Word of God. Both are indispensable. A brittle orthodoxy is not pleasing to the Lord, and neither is religion built solely on emotion and sentimentality.

Jesus Christ had some of the harshest words for the religious “scholars” of His day: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27).

Likewise, when the Sadducees tried to trick Christ with their learning, He replied to them: “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29).

Here were top religious leaders, who had vast learning, but nonetheless fit the description found in 2 Timothy 3:7: “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the

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truth." The Pharisees relied heavily on massive amounts of oral tradition and rabbinic writings, yet had little understanding of the teaching of the Word of God — which can only come by the Holy Spirit, who "will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

What The New Yorker is Really Decrying

Luo further states: "Evangelicalism in America, however, has come to be defined by its anti-intellectualism." This has resulted, he postulates, in "American evangelicals hav[ing] become vulnerable to demagoguery and misinformation." He then quotes supposed evangelical Mark Noll: "The scandal of the evangelical mind is there is not much of an evangelical mind."

We are told that this problem is linked to the fact that "Believers' direct connection to God became the primary focus.... Religious faith became more individualistic and less tethered to institutional authority; immediate experience took priority over tradition."

Scholarship supposedly slipped further because "The church found itself increasingly at odds with advances in science and also new understandings of the Bible, which came from scholars drawing on history, philosophy, and literary criticism to understand passages and intentions and assumptions of the authors behind them."

To make matters worse, these fundamentalists held to "Biblical inerrancy, which Noll points out had never before occupied such a central place in any Christian movement, [and made it] foundational.... Instead of obsessing over Biblical inerrancy, evangelicals should understand the Bible as 'pointing us to the Savior' and 'orienting our entire existence to the service of God.'"

Noll, who accepted a faculty position at Notre Dame, after a number

of years at Wheaton College, "suggests," according to Luo "that evangelicals interested in glorifying God through their thought might be forced to draw ideas from other traditions—mainline Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, or perhaps Eastern Orthodoxy." "The scandal of the evangelical mind seems to be that no mind arises from evangelicalism," writes Noll.

So, in other words, in order to receive academic acclaim, one must deny Biblical inerrancy, accept evolution, and take his cues from apostate religious groups. This increasingly has become a mark of compromising evangelicalism since at least the 1940s.

Modern Evangelicalism

In the 20th century, some of the top leaders who led Bible believers to depart from the mainline denominations were themselves scholars of note. J. Gresham Machen, Robert Dick Wilson, Allen A. MacRae, Charles Woodbridge, and a host of others, all studied at some of the major universities in Europe and the United States.

In fact Machen is famous for his three-part message to the Bible League in Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, on June 17, 1932, entitled "The Importance of Christian Scholarship."

Many fundamental and evangelical colleges, universities and seminaries were founded with rigorous academic standards in the last century or longer ago. Graduates of most of these schools have fared quite well in both Christian and secular professions, and in the public arena.

Up to the present, there have been remarkable men of God, with great godliness who have been able expositors of the Word, and accomplished scholars. It is just that if they dare disagree with Luo, Noll, and the like, they are dismissed as "unscholarly."

Conclusion

1. There certainly are many in evangelicalism today who have substi-

tuted sound Bible teaching with religious "experience" based solely on entertainment and sensationalism. We must stand against this, and demand sound preaching of the Word of God.

2. We must all be careful not to accept anything as fact until we have thoroughly investigated it. There are indeed many "conspiracy theories" out there. We certainly should not be afraid to question things, but we must make sure that what we believe is indeed the truth.
 3. All Bible-believing Christians must be faithful and disciplined in studying and meditating on Scripture. It should be our "delight."
 4. Bible-believing Christians should be excellent in whatever field God leads them to pursue. Colossians 3:23 says: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." With God's help, you should be the best doctor, best musician, best farmer, best construction worker you can be — all for the glory of God!
 5. Christians, particularly ministers and other church leaders, should pursue rigorous study so that they will have the best preparation to "rightly divide the word of truth." Presbyterians and others have always insisted on an "educated ministry." This normally has included the procurement of at least an undergraduate degree, often in the liberal arts, and then a seminary course, filled with Bible study, and also including study of the original languages, church history, Biblical archaeology, and other fields.
- In 1 Peter 3:15, the Apostle gives us a balanced approach to a Christian life pleasing to the Lord. The "Evangelical Mind" is not wasted if we follow Peter's instruction: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." This includes the balance of consecrated study ("be ready") and a sanctified life pleasing to the Lord. •

"AMERICA'S ORIGINAL SIN"?

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From the beginning, there was wide agreement that whatever crimes might have been committed in the death of Mr. Floyd, evenhanded punishment should be meted out according to the dictates of the law, following a careful investigation, and due process being given in a court of law.

However, it became clear that the extensive lawlessness displayed was a pretext for promoting a radical socialist agenda focused on burning our Constitution and our country's founding principles to the ground, with a relentless attack on the police, and law and order in general. A radical new socialist utopia, with cradle-to-grave care — and control — by the government was the end game.

We are not at all discounting concerns about race, and defend the right of all who PEACEFULLY protested — as is guaranteed in the First Amendment of our Constitution. However, the facts show that, for many, racial agitation was the MEANS used to accomplish the real goal. Tearing down a statue or torching the business of a hard-working family — often of the same race — is NOT what someone does who is simply seeking racial justice.

America an evil nation?

When many of us were children, we were taught in school about the evils of slavery, but we also were consistently taught that the United States was the greatest and freest nation on earth, a land of great opportunity. Now our young people are being taught that the United States has had a terrible history and that it must be canceled and obliterated. We need to start over, building a new utopia of social justice.

The left has gone full steam ahead, working to have the Marx-

ist concepts of "critical race theory" and "intersectionality" taught from the earliest grades up. *The New York Times*' "1619 Project," developed by Nikole Hannah-Jones, is one such program that is rapidly making it into the curricula of taxpayer-funded classrooms.

Some of today's destructive terminology is being promoted by left-leaning "evangelicals"

A phrase that is frequently used by the left to describe what they believe to be the overarching element in the founding of the United States is what they call "America's original sin of racism." This has been in the title of several books, and is used widely.

This, and other phrases we often hear today from the "woke" left, were popularized in recent years by such supposed evangelical leaders as Jim Wallis, a left-leaning political activist who founded and edited *Sojourners* magazine.

Wallis has been on the scene for many years. He was involved with the writing of the "Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern," in 1973, along with other evangelical luminaries of the time such as: Carl Henry, Vernon Grounds, Frank Gaebelien, Sharon Gallagher, John Perkins, Richard Mouw, William Petersen, Bernard Ramm, Carl Thomas McIntire¹, and Ron Sider.² Since that time, Wallis, Sider, and some others

of this group have increasingly veered more and more to the left. In recent times, Wallis has served as an advisor to President Barack Obama, and received funds from leftist George Soros for his organizations.

In 2015, Wallis authored a book entitled: *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America*.³ Where have we heard those terms before?

Redefinition of Biblical teaching

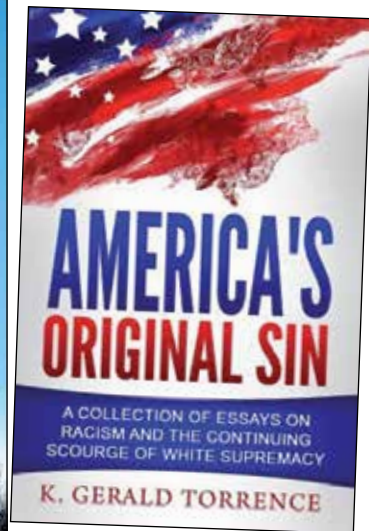
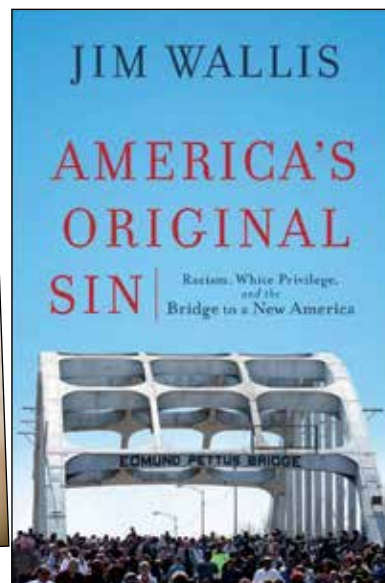
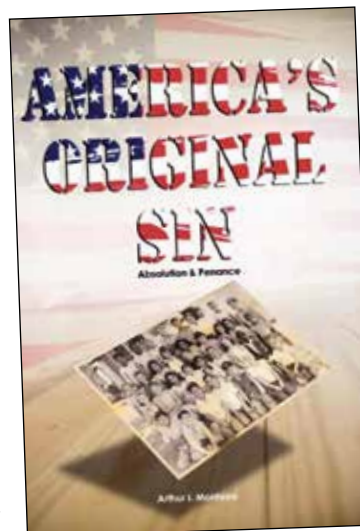
"Original sin" is a theological term, but one which has been ripped from its Biblical moorings. It is now being used in a way totally antithetical to the teaching of Scripture.

When the United States was founded, many students were taught from *The New England Primer*, and other such works. A number of editions of the *Primer* also included the Westminster Shorter Catechism for the students to memorize.

In teaching the alphabet, the students were given short aphorisms to remember. "Original sin" was taught from the perspective of the Bible. The letter **A** had the following words after it: "In **A**dam's fall, we sinned all." **B** was followed by: "Heaven to find, the **B**ible mind," and so forth.

Racism and slavery were certainly shameful parts of our history, yet

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the new teaching is that America was comprised of a far different kind of saints and sinners than we read of in the pages of Scripture.

Instead of the Biblical teaching that we are ALL sinners, and that some have become Christians (saints) by faith alone in Jesus Christ, a major redefinition has taken place. Now, those deemed "the oppressed" are the new saints, and those considered "the oppressors" are the new sinners.

White people, who are automatically guilty of "white supremacy," "white fragility" and "white privilege" — quite apart from anything each individual may say or do — are the sinful oppressors. Whereas, all "minorities" are "the oppressed," and apparently are absolved from all sin because of this status.

"For all have sinned...."

The Bible teaches that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5).

It also teaches: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ..." (Jeremiah 17:9).

The coming of Jesus Christ to earth as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice was because "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10); and "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Therefore, dividing everyone up as either being the "oppressed" (a saint) or an "oppressor" (a sinner) is a decidedly anti-Biblical view, and is destined to bring profoundly terrible results to our country.

The history of slavery

In our sinful world, slavery has existed for most of the existence of

mankind, and in most cultures and among virtually all races. A careful study will document this practice in ancient Mesopotamia, long before Christ. It is documented in the Far East, Middle East, Africa, Australia, Europe, and in North and South America.

Sometimes it was the forced slavery of those of other countries, cultures or races. However, many times it was the enslavement of those of the same race or culture. European serfdom and, later, indentured servitude, involved the enslavement of whites by

The "original sin" of the Bible is met with the marvelous grace of our perfect and holy God to all who come in faith believing. There is no redemption of any kind in the philosophy of the "America's original sin" proponents. Instead, they have a misplaced and destructive desire for revenge, retribution, and needless division.

whites. In Africa, a domestic slave trade was well entrenched long before slaves started to be sold overseas.

Robert Davis, professor of history at Ohio State University, wrote a book entitled *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*. In it, he seeks to do a scientific and scholarly estimate of how many white Europeans and Americans were taken into slavery by the Barbary Muslims in North Africa.

Davis estimates the number to be close to one million. Even those who argue for a lower number affirm that this slave trade of white Europeans, and even Americans, did indeed take place.

Why do we bring this up?

Presenting these historical facts is in no way meant to in any way excuse what took place in the United States in previous centuries. Pointing to one set of evil behavior is never an excuse for other wicked behavior. No good parent will absolve a child from having to take responsibility for his own actions merely because that child protests that "Johnny did it too."

The reason we mention this is simply to show that ALL men are born into wickedness, and men have often treated others terribly when they have gained the ascendancy and were able to wield power. As to slavery, it is a HUMAN problem and has existed in many forms for thousands of years.

A distorted view

Our United States education system has failed our young people, and the situation is about to get very much worse unless true patriots of all races stand up against it. Nothing less than the teaching of honest history, in context, is acceptable.

On August 30, 2019, *Forbes* magazine published an article titled "After All, Didn't America Invent Slavery?" Author Tom Lindsay began his article: "If you think the title's question is silly, you're right. But here's the problem: Increasing numbers of college students today would unhesitatingly respond, '... yes!' to the query. Could it be because that is what they are being taught?"

Lindsay discusses an annual poll of college students taken by professor Duke Pesta, at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, and writes: "By far the most shocking result to emerge from his years of polling is this: 'Students overwhelmingly believe that slavery was an American problem ... and they are very fuzzy about the history of slavery prior to the Colonial era. Their entire education about slavery was confined to America.'"

The tactics of communist propagandists

This distorted teaching in our U.S. schools is by design. In far too many instances, educators have become much more interested in propagandizing students for political ends, than in leading them to dig for factual, balanced truth.

When someone's philosophy is bankrupt, they normally trade in deception, since that is the only way to gain adherents. Sadly, Marxism and socialism are the end game for an increasing number of those in power. Those who refuse to conform are often defamed, face loss of their jobs, and other forms of retaliation.

Look at the reeducation camps prevalent in many Communist societies. The only way to bring conformity is to brainwash the people with "the party line," with the banishment of all "free inquiry."

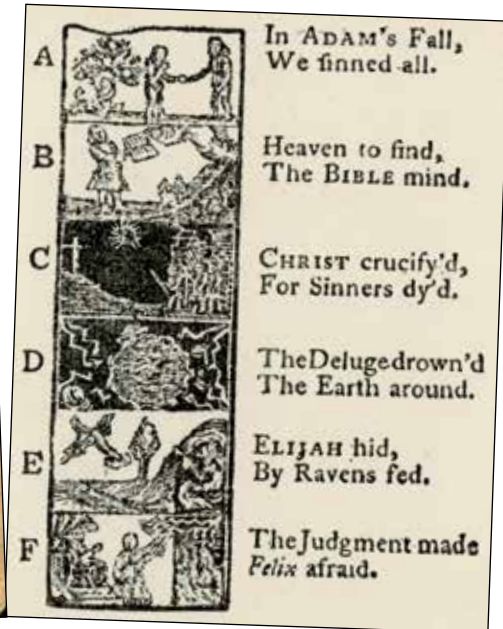
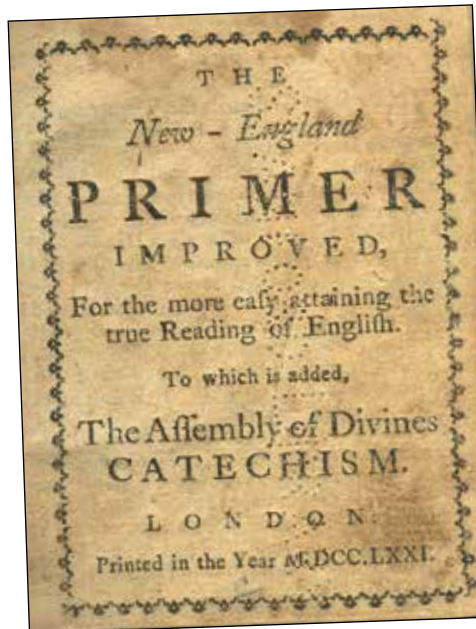
Presently, up to 1.5 million people have been detained in western China and have been placed in such reeducation facilities. These are mostly ethnic Uyghurs, but also include Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other ethnic Turkic Muslims, as well as Christians.

The Communist Manifesto 101

The very first chapter of *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, begins: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." It then defines that struggle as being between "oppressor and oppressed." This is reiterated in chapter 4: "Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes."

Chapter 1 continues: "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."

Whereas the communists of the 19th and 20th centuries sought to stoke class warfare between the lab-



orer and the owner of the means of production, what we are primarily facing today is the stoking of a false warfare between "people of color," and those who are "white."

Thus, the mere color of the pigment of one's skin supposedly makes one automatically guilty of oppression. By any objective standard, those doing the accusing are guilty of racism themselves.

The narrative has been crafted in such a way that to protest that this is not true receives an automatic reply that this proves their case, since your privilege makes you unable to see it. So, the moral of the story of "The Emperor's New Clothes" finds its place in present-day real life discussions.

We are told that a white person supposedly cannot understand racism because he or she has not lived as a racial minority. However, all of us are born in this life exactly where God has placed us. No man of any color knows what all any other individual has experienced in life. Poverty, wealth and position in society in the United States in 2021 are not determined — in most cases — merely as a result of a person's skin color.

Although many of these radical philosophies are framed in terms of "social justice," it is often the case that their adherents are fighting for the opposite of the Biblical definition of justice. Charges of "racism" are

frequently just a ruse — a quest for raw power and the bringing in of anti-Christian socialism.

"Forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions"

Chapter 4 of *The Communist Manifesto* concludes: "They [the communists] openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions."

The tearing down of statues, re-writing of our history, rampant attacks on freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of peaceful assembly, etc., are all part of the same desire today to overthrow our country's heritage and replace it with a godless "utopia," which will indeed be a place devoid of freedom, and where men's consciences will be shackled to the will of the State.

The Black Lives Matter website once stated: "We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and 'villages' that collectively care for one another..." Don't forget that the foundation of communism is "collectivism," and that term has often been used as a near synonym for communism. After much outcry, this page was removed from the website in the fall of

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2020, but there is no indication that this involved any shift in policy.

What we are seeing out of Washington, our universities, major corporations, and the media, is a push to attack the principles upon which our nation was built. If you stand for Biblical principles, you will be viciously attacked, canceled and "made to pay."

The Christian Response

How should we respond? This certainly is not the first time evil men in power have persecuted and sought to destroy nations, while bolstering their own power.

1. Don't be a racist! Each man is responsible directly to God, and it is wrong to judge a man merely on the basis of his skin color, his social status, his ethnicity, etc. God created all of us — with a great variety of features!

James 2:9 tells us: "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." There certainly have been times in our history where the whole society, including many Christians, violated this. In godliness and humility, we must all practice what the Apostle James tells us in the previous verse: "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well."

2. Shun any carnal resentments.

The Bible tells us that the natural man is blind and dead in his sin. We can expect persecution — and dare we say injustice — on the part of those who have accepted a new definition of "original sin." Be thankful for whatever skin color the Lord has given you, and live your life joyfully to the glory of God! James 1:2-3 says: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [various kinds of trials]; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

3. Don't seek revenge. Jesus Christ, who received greater injustice than any man who ever lived, told the people: "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" (Matthew 5:44).

4. Stand for justice. Just because the term "justice" has been coopted to promote very bad things, does not mean that it is not our responsibility to stand for true Biblical justice. Amos 5:24 states: "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

When each of us helps the poor, fights for equal justice under law in our court systems, seeks to elect candidates who will follow Biblical principles, promotes the American (and Biblical) idea of equal opportunity, and when we simply are "kind one to another," we are living a Christian life honoring to the Lord. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). The Christian should be the VERY BEST EXAMPLE of one who loves those of all races, and seeks to promote harmony.

5. Confront evil. Being a loving Christian does not mean that we should encourage evil by our silence. Always stand for objective truth. The Bible says lying comes from Satan (John 8:44). Standing for righteousness is a theme found all through the Scriptures. Isaiah 58:1 says: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

6. Evangelize. The greatest matter of justice in all eternity is that God is a holy God and requires perfect justice. Due to Adam's "original sin," we are ALL justly condemned to die and spend eternity in hell.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 tells us concerning those who reject the gospel and receive the just punishment they deserve: "Who shall be punished with

everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Yet "the judge of all the earth" declares that He is "a just God and a Saviour" (Isaiah 45:21).

Romans 3:26 says concerning Christ: "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Only the Gospel of Christ can change hearts and only those with hearts changed by the Gospel can truly build strong, just, and harmonious societies.

Redemption

The "original sin" presented in the Bible shows each individual man and woman to be responsible directly to God for their own sin. Yet, it is met with the blessed Good News of Christ. "He who knew no sin" — He who was totally innocent — died on the cross to save us from our sin. This marvelous redemption is something that no man is capable of achieving for himself.

In contrast, there is no redemption of any kind in the philosophy of the "America's original sin" proponents. Instead, they have a misplaced and destructive desire for revenge, retribution, and needless division. Instead of individual responsibility, they declare a collective guilt based merely on one's immutable features. We must strongly oppose true racism, but we must also stand strongly against this wicked philosophy which will never produce righteous, just, or constructive results — but only destruction, animosity and chaos. •

¹Son of Carl McIntire, longtime president of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC).

²"Evangelicals on Justice: Socially Speaking ...," *Christianity Today*, December 21, 1973.

³Jim Wallis, *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press [a division of Baker Publishing Group], 2016).

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a magnificent tolerance. One notable example of such tolerance is to be found during his imprisonment at Rome, as attested by the Epistle to the Philippians. Apparently certain Christian teachers at Rome had been jealous of Paul's greatness. As long as he had been at liberty they had been obliged to take a secondary place; but now that he was in prison, they seized the supremacy. They sought to raise up affliction for Paul in his bonds; they preached Christ even of envy and strife.... But Paul was not disturbed. 'Whether in pretence, or in truth,' he said, 'Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice' (Philippians 1:18). The way in which the preaching was being carried on was wrong, but the message itself was true; and Paul was far more interested in the content of the message than in the manner of its presentation. It is impossible to conceive a finer piece of broad-minded tolerance.

"But the tolerance of Paul was not indiscriminate. He displayed no tolerance, for example, in Galatia. There, too, there were rival preachers. But Paul had no tolerance for them. 'But though we,' he said, 'or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed' (Galatians 1:8).

"What is the reason for the broad tolerance in Rome, and the fierce anathemas in Galatia? The answer is perfectly plain. In Rome, Paul was tolerant, because ... the content of the message that was being proclaimed by the rival teachers was true; in Galatia he was intolerant, because there the content of the rival message was false. In neither case did personalities have anything to do with Paul's attitude....

"The Judaizers no doubt were morally far from perfect, but Paul's opposition to them would have been

exactly the same if they had all been angels from heaven. His opposition was based altogether upon the **falsity** of their teaching; they were substituting for the one true gospel a **false** gospel, which was no gospel at all. It never occurred to Paul that a gospel might be true for one man and not another; the blight of pragmatism had never fallen upon his soul. Paul was convinced of the objective truth of the gospel message, and devotion to that truth was the great passion of his life.

"What was the difference between the teaching of Paul and the



J. Gresham Machen

teaching of the Judaizers?... To the modern Church the difference would have seemed a mere theological subtlety. About many things the Judaizers were in perfect agreement with Paul. The Judaizers believed that Jesus was the Messiah; there is not a shadow of evidence that they objected to Paul's lofty view of the person of Christ. Without the slightest doubt, they believed that Jesus had really risen from the dead. They believed, moreover, that faith in Christ was necessary to salvation."¹

Here follows the sentence that arrested my attention: "But the trouble was, they believed that something else was also **necessary**; they believed

that what Christ had done needed to be pieced out by the believer's own effort to keep the law."²

For the Judaizers, something more was **necessary** for salvation than what Christ had done: the believer's own efforts to keep the law — the believer's good works — were **necessary**.

Machen continued: "From the modern point of view the difference would have seemed to be very slight. Paul, as well as the Judaizers, believed that the keeping of the law of God, in its deepest import, is inseparably connected with faith. The difference con-

cerned only the logical ... order of three steps. Paul said that a man (1) first believes in Christ; (2) then is justified before God; (3) then immediately proceeds to keep God's law. The Judaizers said that a man (1) believes on Christ; and (2) keeps the law of God the best he can; and then (3) is justified. The difference would seem to modern 'practical' Christians to be a highly subtle and intangible matter, hardly worthy of consideration at all in view of the large measure of agreement in the practical realm. What a splendid cleaning up of the Gentile cities it would have been if the Judaizers had succeeded in extending to those cities the observance of the Mosaic law, even including the unfortunate ceremonial observances! Surely Paul ought to have made common cause with teachers who were so nearly in agreement with him; surely he ought to have applied to them the great principle of **Christian unity**.

"As a matter of fact, however, Paul did nothing of the kind; and **only because he (and others) did nothing of the kind does the Christian Church exist today**. Paul saw very clearly that the difference between the Judaizers and himself was the difference between two entirely distinct types of religion; it was the difference between a religion of merit and a religion of

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grace. If Christ provides only a part of our salvation, leaving us to provide the rest, then we are still hopeless under the load of sin. For no matter how small the gap which must be bridged before salvation can be attained, the awakened conscience sees clearly that our wretched attempt at goodness is insufficient even to bridge that gap. The guilty soul enters into the hopeless reckoning with God, to determine whether we have really done our part. And thus we groan again under the old bondage of the law. Such an attempt to piece out the work of Christ by our own merit, Paul saw clearly, is the very essence of unbelief; Christ will do everything or nothing, and the only hope is to throw ourselves unreservedly on His mercy and trust Him for all.

“Paul certainly was right. The differences which divided him from the Judaizers was no mere theological subtlety, but concerned the very heart and core of the religion of Christ. ‘Just as I am without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me’ — that was what Paul was contending for in Galatia; that hymn would never have been written if the Judaizers had won. And without the thing which that hymn expresses there is no Christianity at all.”³

Who were the Judaizers?

Machen further identifies the Judaizers in his *Notes on Galatians*. They “were men of Jewish race; and since they sought to induce Gentile people to “Judaize” — that is, to adopt the Jewish manner of life — they are commonly called Judaizers....

“Paul was not afraid to say ‘Not’ or ... ‘No’; he had no sympathy with the feeble notion that a man can speak the truth without opposing error: and so this epistle is a fighting epistle from beginning to end.... Paul was fighting against the doctrine that a man can earn a part, at least, of his salvation

by his own obedience to God’s law; he was fighting against the doctrine that a man is justified not by faith alone, but by **faith and works**.”⁴

He added that there are “different ways of exalting the merit of men over against the Cross of Christ; they are all of them attacks upon the very heart and core of the Christian religion.”⁵

“If we have to fill up even the slightest gap by our own works, then we are lost in sin; for the awakened conscience sees clearly that our own works are insufficient to bridge even the smallest gap. We must trust Christ for nothing or for all; to trust Him only for part is the essence of unbelief....”⁶

“What Paul is attacking in Galatians is not ceremonialism in religion, or a divisive morality, but the principle of merit. The real controversy in Galatia was not between outward works and inward works, but upon human merit however attained and the divine grace.”⁷

The Judaizers contradicted the Apostle’s authoritative teaching. Paul wrote, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**” (Galatians 2:16).

Falsity

The difference between Paul and the Judaizers was not the secondary issues about which men in the church may differ, but between truth and error. Machen repeatedly alludes to the “**falsity**” of the Judaizers’ doctrine: “The content of the rival message was **false**.”

Let me emphasize this part of Machen’s comments: Paul’s “opposition was based altogether upon the **falsity** of their teaching; they were substituting for the one true gospel a **false** gospel which was no gospel at all.”⁸

Machen’s words echo the words of Paul to the Galatians, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed ... unto

another gospel: which is not another” (Galatians 1:6).

A mere subtlety?

Machen wrote, “To the modern Church the difference would have seemed to be a mere subtlety.” We suspect those words describe the thinking of some of our Bible Presbyterian brethren concerning the Shepherd/Kinnaird doctrinal issues in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). Within that group there had been a long controversy (1975-1982) over the teaching of Norman Shepherd, a former professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, and again in 2002 with elder John Kinnaird, who taught basically what Shepherd had taught.

Central to that conflict was the necessity of good works to justification. During the seven-year period of conflict, Shepherd had presented thirty-four theses that articulated his positions on disputed doctrines. We focus only on his thesis 23, which, in our judgment, lined up with what Paul ascribed to the Judaizers. Shepherd stated, “Good works ... though not the ground of the believer’s justification, are nevertheless **necessary** for salvation ... and therefore for justification.” In Machen’s words, the Judaizers taught that “the believer’s own efforts were **necessary** for salvation.”

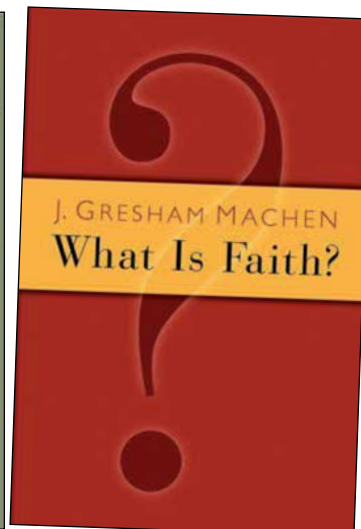
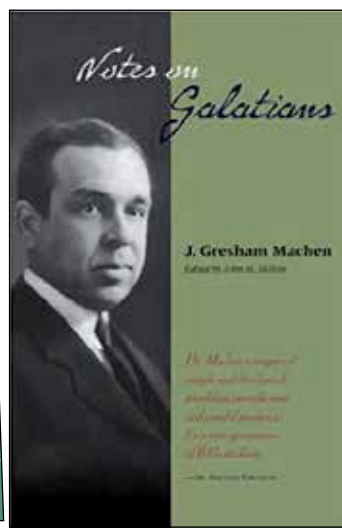
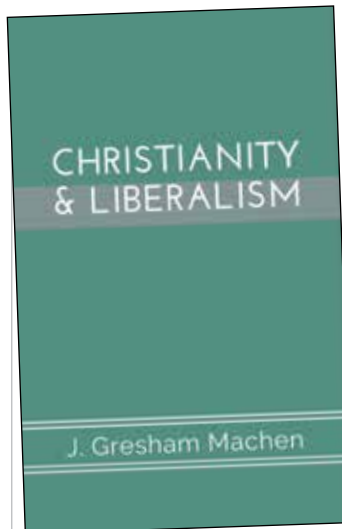
If the Judaizers of Galatia were teaching what was false, how could Shepherd be teaching the same thing, and his be true or at least harmless? This much is certain: the same doctrine that Shepherd taught, when preached by the original Judaizers, was regarded by Paul as “another gospel” and he said, “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:9). Machen explained that the accursed man “should be regarded as having fallen into that state about which the Epistle to the Hebrews says: ‘It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’”⁹

At that time, a minority connected with the OPC and Westminster Seminary strongly differed with Shepherd's theses. We heartily agree with Philip Hughes, an author and visiting professor of New Testament, who objected to the teaching in a letter to the faculty of Westminster Seminary in 1978. He wrote, "to speak of a necessity of these good works for our salvation, to relate them to 'standing justified before the Lord' is to transpose them from the sphere of sanctification to the sphere of justification; and this, in the degree to which it is done, is to assign them that very justifying status as works of the law which Paul has repudiated.... Let us not, then speak of a necessity of any works other than those of Christ for our justification."¹⁰

Fifteen men signed a letter to the Trustees of Westminster Seminary, stating, "The statements that the believer's good works are **necessary** to justification ... appear to have much the same force as the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification.... The only obedience which suffices for justification is that of Christ, imputed to us. If the believer must look to any degree to his own obedience for his justification, then his hope is lost."¹¹

When some within the Philadelphia Presbytery of the OPC were attempting to bring Shepherd under discipline for false teaching, he was allowed to leave the OPC for the Christian Reformed Church. All efforts to discipline him failed. But though Shepherd left, his teachings continued to be embraced and disseminated by those sympathetic to him.

Twenty-some years later, an adherent, OPC ruling elder John Kinnaird, was using Shepherd's notes to teach a Sunday school class. Kinnaird clearly subscribed to Shepherd's teaching, having years before placed a self-paid full-page ad in *The Presbyterian Journal*, February 24, 1982. It included Shepherd's 34 theses, to which Kinnaird added, "The undersigned is not neutral on this issue. I would place



myself firmly in the line of those who proclaim that redemption is wholly by the grace of God. I believe that Professor Shepherd's theses (excepting perhaps 8 and 9) are an excellent and systematic explanation of the relationship between faith, repentance, and the good works in the justification of the sinner...."

Those theses he approved included Thesis 23!

In 2002, Kinnaird was charged with teaching a false doctrine of justification by faith PLUS works, and was found guilty by his church session (ruling body). His appeal to his presbytery was denied, leaving the guilty verdict intact. However, he appealed and was subsequently acquitted by the OPC General Assembly. Twice then, in the span of twenty years, OPC men, whose teachings on justification aligned with the ancient Judaizers, were left undisciplined. In what the OPC allowed and failed to condemn, did it not turn its back on Machen, the leading figure in the founding of the denomination in 1936? Such is the potency of error.

In their ordination vows, the men of the Bible Presbyterian Synod, as well as those of the OPC (like Machen himself), subscribed to "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice."¹² They also vowed to "receive and adopt" the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, the subordinate stand-

ards, "as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scriptures."¹³ Both the Scriptures and the Confession plainly and forcefully teach justification by faith alone. Yet, sadly, the OPC — contrary to its own confessional standards — allowed the teaching of the necessity of good works to justification to go unchecked on at least two occasions.

Many in the Bible Presbyterian Synod were so enthusiastic and determined to establish corresponding relations with the OPC that they overlooked that body's disciplinary neglect. They failed to receive enough votes in several successive Synods, as presbyters spoke against forming a relationship with a denomination where the doctrine of Shepherd was tolerated, and where one staunch adherent, charged with "teaching a doctrine of justification by faith plus works," was acquitted by their General Assembly.

However, a majority was achieved in 2004 and formal corresponding relations were established with the OPC. Those men who now found themselves in the minority believed, with sadness and disappointment, that they could not condone the tolerance they perceived — as it related to such an essential doctrine of the faith. This is one main reason why the South Atlantic Presbytery withdrew from the Synod and took the name Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church.

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It is reasonable to fear that a quiet surrender to this Judaizing doctrine allows for doctrinal drift. How far remains to be seen. What the men of the BPC Synod could overlook, the men of Faith Presbytery could not.

As Machen justly and repeatedly describes the Judaizers as false, we ought to recognize that when and where their doctrine is taught, it is also false. Truth has not changed. This has implications for the doctrine of Norman Shepherd. It is troubling that ecclesiastical relations should be so desirable that men could overlook even a few who embrace falsehood. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.”

As Paul was unmasking the Judaizers, he wrote: “to whom we gave place ... not for an hour” (Galatians 2:5). Let me repeat Machen’s point about unity: “Surely Paul ought to have made common cause with teachers who were so nearly in agreement with him; surely he ought to have applied to them the great principle of Christian unity. As a matter of fact, however Paul did nothing of the kind; and only because he (and others) did nothing of the kind does the Christian Church exist.”¹⁴

Machen speaks further about faith and works in his book *What Is Faith?*: “Paul is not merely arguing that a man is justified by faith — so much no doubt his opponents, the Judaizers admitted — but he is arguing that a man is justified by faith alone. What the Judaizers said was not that a man is justified by works, but that he is justified by faith and works — exactly the thing that is being taught by the Roman Catholic Church today. No doubt they admitted that it was necessary for a man to have faith in Christ in order to be saved: but they held that it was also necessary for him to keep the law the best he could; salvation, according to them, was not by faith alone and not by works alone

but by faith and works together. A man’s obedience to the law of God, they held, was not, indeed, sufficient for salvation, but it was necessary; and it became sufficient when it was supplemented by Christ.

“Against this compromising solution of the problem, the Apostle insists upon a sharp alternative: a man may be saved by works (if he keeps the law perfectly), or he may be saved by faith; but he cannot possibly be saved by faith and works together. Christ, according to Paul, will do everything or nothing; if righteousness is in slightest measure obtained by our obedience to the law, then Christ died in vain; if we trust in slightest measure in our own good works, then we have turned away from grace and Christ profiteth us nothing.”¹⁵

It is difficult for me to believe that Shepherd’s position of the necessity of good works to justification could have corresponded more closely with that of the Judaizers, or that Machen’s position could have been more diametrically opposed to that of the Judaizers.

About Galatians 2:21, Machen commented, “... if, as the Judaizers say, justification comes even in part through our own obedience to the law, then Christ died in vain. This verse is the key verse of the Epistle to the Galatians; it expresses the central thought of the Epistle. The Judaizers attempted to supplement the saving work of Christ by the merit of their own obedience to the law. “That,” says Paul, “is impossible: Christ will do everything or nothing: earn your salvation if your obedience to the law is perfect, or else trust wholly to Christ’s completed work; you cannot do both; you cannot combine merit and grace; if justification even in slightest measure is through human merit, then Christ died in vain.”¹⁶

What can we learn?

What we can learn from the godly Machen, who in turn learned it at

the feet of Paul, is intolerance for the ancient doctrine that “what Christ has done needed to be pieced out by the believers own effort to keep the law” and its modern equivalent, “that good works ... are necessary for salvation ... and therefore for justification.”

The few paragraphs we have cited from Machen may 1. hearten those of Faith Presbytery who acted with a degree of the understanding Machen demonstrated; 2. give some men cause to rethink their positions and actions; and 3. alert others who will some day be confronted with the Judaizing doctrine in its modern dress.

As Abel is described in Hebrews 11, Machen “being dead, yet speaketh.” •

¹J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), pp. 21-25.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴J. Gresham Machen, *Notes on Galatians* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1973), p. 9.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁸Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, pp. 22, 23.

⁹Machen, *Notes on Galatians*, p. 48.

¹⁰John Robbins, *A Companion to the Current Justification Controversy* (Unicoi, TN: The Trinity Foundation, 2003), pp. 113-115.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹²*Constitution of the Bible Presbyterian Church, Form of Government*, Chapters XII:3:(1) and XIV:12:(1) (Charlotte: Bible Presbyterian Synod, 2008), pp. 139 and 143.

¹³*Ibid.*, Chapter XII:3:(2) and XIV:12:(2).

¹⁴Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 24.

¹⁵J. Gresham Machen, *What Is Faith?* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1925), p. 193.

¹⁶Machen, *Notes on Galatians*, p. 161.



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