

# THE LORD

## THY LOVE HAS SOUGHT AND FOUND US

*Lord, Thy love has sought and found us  
Wandering in this desert wide,  
Thou hast thrown Thine arms around us,  
For us suffered, bled and died:  
Sing my soul! He loved thee,  
Jesus gave Himself for me.*

*Hark! what sounds of bitter weeping,  
From yon lonesome garden sweep,  
'Tis the Lord His vigil keeping,  
Whilst His followers sink in sleep.  
Ah, my soul, He loved thee,  
Yes, He gave Himself for me.*

*He is speaking to His Father,  
Tasting deep that bitter cup,  
Yet He takes it, willing rather  
For our sakes to drink it up.  
Oh what love! He loved me!  
Save Himself, my soul, for me.*

*Then that closing scene of anguish;  
All God's waves and billows roll  
Over Him, there left to languish  
On the cross, to save my soul.  
Matchless love! how vast, how free,  
Jesus gave Himself for me.*

*Hark again! His cries are waking  
Echoes on dark Calvary's hill;  
God, my God, art Thou forsaking  
Him who always did Thy will?  
Ah! my soul, it was for thee,  
Yes! He gave Himself for me.*

*Lord, we joy, Thy toils are ended,  
Glad Thy suffering time is o'er,  
To Thy Father's throne ascended,  
There Thou liv'st to die no more.  
Yes, my soul! He lives for thee,  
He who gave Himself for me.*

*Lord, we worship and adore Thee  
For Thy rich, Thy matchless grace;  
Perfect soon in joy before Thee,  
We shall see Thee face to face.  
Yet e'en now our song shall be,  
Jesus gave Himself for me.*

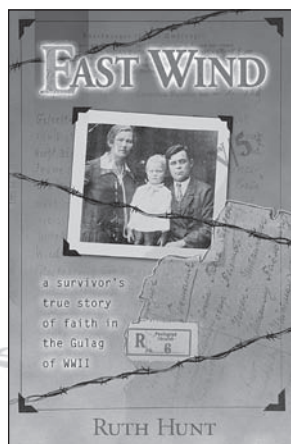
**Josiah Hopkins**  
1786-1862



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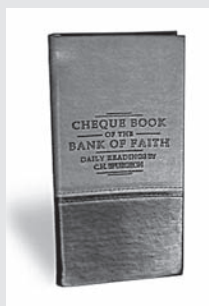
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[Excerpted from the *Little Flock Hymn Book* by Adrian Roach]

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# THE BEREAN CALL

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## Wonderful Love

Dave Hunt

Recently, I have been ever more convicted of how pitifully inadequate my understanding and appreciation really is of God and His love. But isn't it to be expected that our understanding of the infinite God and of His love that "passeth knowledge" (Eph 3:19) would be lacking a great deal? Indeed not. The Lord declared that we are to glory in our understanding of Him who exercises "lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth..." (Jer 9:24). *Understanding* of the infinite God? That seems impossible! Yet this is His desire for us. The same glorious One who said to Abraham, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gn 15:1), desires to reveal Himself fully to us by His indwelling Holy Spirit!

Why, then, is our understanding of and love for God so feeble? The answer is not hard to come by if we pause to take an honest look at our lives. What and whom do we really seek? What is our ambition, our passion? Is it not for the *things* of earth rather than for *Him* whose throne is in heaven? Though we would deny this indictment with our lips, do we not often demonstrate its shameful truth with our lives?

Depending upon the type of work we do, we may have to concentrate on our tasks and not be able even to think of our Lord during our business or labor. Others of us could be rejoicing in the Lord while we work. But what about going to and from work? And what about when we are at home? How much of our time there that we could have used to enrich our fellowship with our Lord is wasted on TV, novels, games, and other trivial pursuits of which we will be ashamed when we see Him face to face?

If we truly want to know God, He must be our number one priority. Did He not promise, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13)? *With all your heart!* Could that be the problem? The New Testament likewise testifies that in coming to God we must believe that He rewards "them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6). *Diligently!*

Where is our passion for God and Christ? Do those of us who claim to know and love our Lord seek diligently to know Him better? Do our lives echo the

psalmist's heart, "My soul thirsteth for... the living God" (Ps 42:2)? Do we share the passion that was Paul's: "That I may know him....I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:10, 14)?

In all honesty, how many of us have any real concern or exert any great effort to keep the very first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Mt 22:37)? Jesus called this not only the first, but the "great commandment" (v. 38). Have we forgotten that fact? In seeking to live for our Lord and to avoid sin, have we overlooked the worst sin of all, failing to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind? When did you last express your love to Him as the passion of your heart?

We may not miss a church service, (though rare are such individuals today).

AND THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT  
THEY MIGHT KNOW THEE THE ONLY TRUE  
GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST, WHOM THOU  
HAST SENT.

—John 17:3

We may sing lustily and sincerely of our love for our Lord in company with others of the "faithful few." And that is commendable. But let the last "Amen" sound at a "worship" service and conversations immediately and automatically turn to everything but Christ and God. How much "fellowship" after a church service consists of breathless and excited sharing of the wonders of God's love? Why not? How much is taken up with everything else? Is this not how we reveal our hearts, our true love?

God tenderly reminded Israel, His chosen, "I remember...the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness....Israel was holiness unto the LORD..." (Jer 2:2,3). But then He sadly lamented, "My people have forgotten me days without number" (Jer 2:32). Worse than that, they had turned from the true God, who had delivered them from Egypt, brought them through the Red Sea on dry ground, fed them with manna, subdued their enemies, and brought them triumphantly into the Promised Land. Turned from Him to what? Incredibly, to worship idols of wood and stone! They had forsaken the "fountain of living waters" to scavenge a sip from broken and contaminated

cisterns that could hold no water (2:13)!

Reluctantly, Christ rebuked the early church at Ephesus: "Thou hast left thy first love" (Rv 2:4)! What heartbreaking sadness that must have caused our Lord! What about you and me? Have we told Him, from overflowing hearts, that we love Him—today, this week, this month? And beyond what we know intellectually and profess with our lips—what is the reality that our lives demonstrate day after day? Do our actions contradict our words? Do our shallow lives reflect the poverty of so much that passes for "worship" in many churches today but is little more than the repetition of pitifully empty expressions from new song writers? Although sincere, many are not spiritually mature enough to be writing replacements for the old hymns of the faith written by people who knew the Lord for many years and expressed their love and appreciation for God and Christ so well. It's not the *style*—it's the words and the lack of real depth so often expressed in contemporary "worship."

I grieve over the shallowness of today's popular "worship" songs that have replaced discarded hymns of doctrine and depth. For example: "I love you, Lord [that's good to profess], and I lift my voice to worship Thee; O my soul, rejoice. Take joy, my King, in what You hear. Let it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear." But what "sweet, sweet sound" has He heard? Nothing except a profession of love so empty that it has no expression of His great goodness to show genuine understanding and appreciation that would gladden His heart. Consider, in contrast, the depth of gratitude expressed in one of the hundreds of hymns that has been cast aside:

O teach us, Lord, Thy searchless love to know,  
Thou who hast died! Before our feeble faith,  
Lord Jesus, show Thy hands and side,  
that our glad hearts, responsive unto Thine,  
may wake with all the power of love divine.

Thy death has brought to light the Father's heart  
and ours has won. And now we contemplate Thee as Thou art—God's glorious Son.  
And know that we are loved with that great love that rests on Thee in those bright courts above.

Thy flesh is meat, Thy blood, blest Savior,  
shed is drink indeed. On Thee, the true,  
the heavenly living bread, our souls would feed.  
And live with Thee in life's eternal home,  
where sin, nor want, nor woe, nor death can come.



Jesus said that to have eternal life we must know “the only true God, and Jesus Christ...” (Jn 17:3). How could we know Him without knowing His wonderful love? And how could we truly know the infinite love He proved on the Cross without our hearts overflowing in love and gratitude and praise? Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian saints (and surely for us today) was that “ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph 3:17-19). Another past hymn writer put it like this: “It passeth knowledge, that dear love of thine, Lord Jesus, Savior, yet this heart of mine would of thy love in all its length and breadth, its height and depth, its everlasting strength, know more and more!”

What praise and thanksgiving we owe Him for His “great love wherewith he loved us” (Eph 2:4)! We believe in God’s love; we talk and sing about it and at times are tearfully overwhelmed by its magnificence. And yet I am overcome with shame because my highest thoughts and most eloquent words fall so far short of expressing from my heart the response that such wonderful love deserves. My constant cry is, “Lord, fill my thirsting heart with a deeper revelation of Yourself and Your wonderful love so that I may give You the praise and love of which You are worthy!”

When I pause to seek deeper understanding and appreciation, it seems beyond comprehension that the infinite God would love *me*—and not with a generic love but with an intimate, personal passion just for *me*! The hymn writer asks,

Love sent my Savior to die in my stead.  
Why should He love me so?  
Meekly to Calvary’s Cross He was led.  
Why should He love me so?  
Why should my Savior to Calvary go?  
Why should He love me so?

In awesome wonder, we realize how unworthy we are of the least of His mercies. We recognize that this burning question of why He loves us finds no answer within ourselves. *Nothing in us* could in the least merit His infinite and pure love, which is far beyond our highest thoughts.

The answer to that question, of course, is found in 1 John 4:8, 16: “God is love”! He cannot *but* love all—because love is the very essence of His nature. But that fact does not in the least diminish the wonder of or depersonalize His love that is so high and yet its intimate passion reaches so low to embrace sinners, even those in rebellion against Him! From hymns buried in the past, long cast aside by today’s “worship

teams,” comes the glorious refrain:

What condescension, bringing us redemption;  
That in the dead of night, not one faint hope in sight;  
God, glorious, tender, laid aside His splendor,  
Stooping to woo, to win, to save my soul!  
Without reluctance, flesh and blood His substance,  
He took the form of man, revealed the hidden plan.  
O glorious mystery! Sacrifice of Calvary!  
And now I know He is the great I AM!

The chorus of that song expresses the response of redeemed hearts to such wonderful love: “O, how I love Him, how I adore Him—my breath, my sunshine, my all in all! The great Creator became my Savior, and all God’s fullness dwelleth in Him!”

The fact that God’s love “passeth knowledge” and yet can be known is not surprising. Indeed, it is testified to by our experience in this sinful world. Even human love is mysterious beyond our comprehension. That is

AND THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT THEY  
MIGHT KNOW THEE THE ONLY TRUE GOD,  
AND JESUS CHRIST, WHOM THOU HAST  
SENT.

—John 17:3

because it comes from the heart—and “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9). The divorce rate among professing evangelical Christians is about the same as among the unsaved: about 50 percent. These are husbands and wives who once solemnly, sincerely, and with high hopes pledged their love until parted by death, yet at some point found life so unbearable with the one they had passionately loved that they broke their word.

Those who remain faithful, in spite of all, learn that love is not merely an emotion but a sworn commitment that builds character when it is kept. And that faithfulness, in the face of trials that test it, strengthens love itself. So it is with our love for God. There will be trials that will cause us to doubt His love, and other attractions that will compete for the affections belonging to Him alone. When doubts arise, when fears press in, or when lust invades to unseat Christ from the throne in our hearts, we need only contemplate Calvary to find that nothing can compete with His love for us. Echoing from 150 years ago come words that break our hearts:

Lord, Thy love has sought and found  
us wand’ring in this desert wide.  
Thou hast thrown Thine arms around us,  
for us suffered, bled and died.

Hark! What sounds of bitter weeping from  
yon lonesome garden sweep?  
'Tis the Lord His vigil keeping, whilst His  
followers sink in sleep.  
O blessed Lord, what hast thou done? How  
vast a ransom giv’n?  
Thyself of God th’ eternal Son, the Lord  
of earth and heav’n.  
Thy Father, in His gracious love, didst  
spare Thee from His side;  
And Thou didst stoop to bear above, at  
such a cost, thy bride.  
Unseen, we love Thee; dear Thy name;  
but when our eyes behold,  
With joyful wonder we’ll exclaim, “The  
half hath not been told.”  
For Thou exceedest all the fame our ears  
have ever heard.  
How happy we who know thy name, and  
trust Thy faithful Word!

How could a holy God justly forgive sinners? That was the problem facing God, which His love overcame. Again the echo of a hymn comes out of the distant past to thrill our hearts:

Wonderful love that rescued me, sunk  
deep in sin.  
Guilty and vile as I could be, no hope  
within.  
When every ray of light had fled, O glorious  
day!  
Raising my soul from out the dead, love  
found a way!  
Love found a way to redeem my soul.  
Love found a way that could make me  
whole.  
Love sent my Lord to the Cross of shame.  
Love found a way—O praise His Holy  
Name!

And let us not forget what it cost not only the Son but His Father: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” The Father gave the Son of His love to be mocked, falsely accused, abused, scourged, and crucified by His creatures. Out of His infinite love for us, He laid on His Son the sins of the world, punished Him as though He were sin itself, and caused Him to endure the eternal Lake-of-Fire suffering for the individual sins of all mankind that would ever exist. He loved *us* that much? Yes! Think of that—meditate upon it!

We cannot even imagine the anguish of both Father and Son, expressed in that incomprehensible cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Ps 22:1; Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34). And it was all so that we who deserved nothing but eternal punishment could be forgiven! That the Father and Son would love sinners that much is beyond our comprehension—but it ought to awaken a response of love and gratitude within our hearts that will change our lives forever! May it be so to His glory and the salvation of souls!

TBC

## Quotable

God does not expect us to give up, to give in, to accept the church as it is and to condone what is happening. He expects His believing children to measure the church against the standards and the blessings promised in the Word of God. Then, with love and reverence and prayer and in the leading of the Spirit of God we will quietly and patiently endeavor to align the church with the Word of God....

None of us is as concerned as we should be about the image we really project to the community around us. At least not when we profess to belong to Jesus Christ and still fail to show forth His love and compassion as we should.

We who are fundamentalists...have gained the reputation of being...great fighters for the truth...we are obligated to stand up for the truth and to contend for the faith when necessary. But we can do a whole lot more...by being Christ-like than we can by figuratively beating [others] over the head.... If we are led by the Spirit of God and if we show forth the love of God this world needs...we become the “winsome saints” [and] those around us will know that Christ is living His life in us.

*A.W. Tozer, Whatever Happened to Worship?, pp. 10-11, 99*

## Q&A

**Question [composite of several]: Was this a misstatement, or do you really believe what you said in your September Q&A: “Those who only know the false gospel of Calvinism are not saved”?**

**Answer:** The original question was, “Is it possible for someone who believes only in the soteriology of Calvin to be saved?” As I said in my response, there are many Calvinists who were saved before they became Calvinists or who have believed the true gospel in spite of their Calvinism—but “those who know only the false gospel of Calvinism are not saved.” If all one believes is that infant baptism saves, as Calvin taught (and which is the case with many Calvinists), one is certainly not saved. If a person believes that he was saved through infant baptism, how is it possible for him, without relinquishing that false belief, to truly be saved by believing the gospel? He has no need of the true gospel, having already been forgiven his sins and made a child of God through infant baptism. He may affirm at his confirmation that Christ died for his sins, but he still believes that the benefit of that sacrifice came to him through

infant baptism long before his “confirmation” of this lie.

How could that false faith save? If it does, then the many former Catholics, Lutherans, and Presbyterians who realized they weren’t saved through their infant baptism, and who put their faith in Christ, were born again, and then baptized as believers, have been deluded. But they would vehemently deny that they were saved all the time in spite of their faith in infant baptism! And they would reject Calvin himself as an “ex-Catholic”—because he continued to rely upon his infant baptism for salvation, he declared that being baptized as a baby was the sure way of knowing one was among the elect, he opposed those who got saved and were then baptized, he banned Anabaptists from Geneva in 1537, and he even had some burned at the stake for this belief.

Am I denying that Calvin was saved? No, only God knew his heart. But if all he believed was (as he taught) that Christ died only for the elect, and that his infant baptism into the Roman Catholic Church proved that he was one of the elect, then he never got saved no matter how eloquently he wrote about Christ’s sufferings on the Cross for our sins.

If all one believes is that one has no choice—that it is God who *causes* some to believe and not others, and that one must be unwittingly regenerated by Him and only then given faith to believe the gospel—how can such a person make a genuine choice to believe in Christ? How could that person, consistent with this Calvinist belief, ever have the assurance offered in 1 John 5:13? No matter how simple and strong his faith in Christ might seem to be, how could he be certain that such “faith in Christ” was truly given to him by God after He had regenerated him?

If all one believes is that Christ died only for the elect but not for all—how can that person be certain that Christ died for *him* and that his faith in Christ is not presumption? How can he believe the true gospel that “if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink...let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Jn 7:37; Rv 22:17), if he really believes that he is totally depraved and unable either to hear the invitation or respond to it? Calvin even said that God gives a false sense of assurance to the non-elect the better to damn them. If one’s most basic belief denies the very assurance Scripture offers, how can it be said that one believes the gospel promise of “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31)?

That a person may believe the true gospel and thus be truly saved in spite of

believing the false gospel of Calvinism may be possible. But I don’t see how one could sort out the fact that contradictory beliefs were being held. What does one really believe?

**Question: When the Rapture occurs, will we leave our clothes behind us in a heap where we were when Christ caught us up to meet Him in the clouds?**

**Answer:** We certainly will not take our earthly clothes with us to heaven—nor our tooth fillings, prostheses, etc. But I see no reason why one’s false teeth or artificial hips would be visibly left behind. They would simply disappear along with the rest of one’s natural body (including all of the medical repairs and patches) in the instantaneous transformation when “we shall all be changed...and this mortal shall have put on immortality” (1 Cor 15:51-54).

Likewise, when we change from earthly clothes to heavenly robes, why would anything be left behind? Some suggest that our clothes will be visibly left behind in a heap to show that we have been raptured to heaven. But that doesn’t fit with the fact that a “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thes 2:11) will be given to those left behind. Everything will be *changed*, not *abandoned*.

The only thing Elijah left behind was his mantle, and that was deliberate as a sign that his authority and power had been passed on to Elisha. No, we will not leave our clothes behind in a heap—they will disappear, just as we will, without a trace. This is my opinion—you have to make up your own mind. But the Scripture doesn’t make this absolutely clear, so don’t spend a lot of time studying and least of all arguing about it.

**Question: How can a non-Calvinist explain 2 Thessalonians 2:13? Isn’t it quite conclusive that those to whom Paul wrote had been “chosen [unto] salvation”—i.e., predestined to heaven?**

**Answer:** That scripture states, “...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” Does that mean they had been predestined for heaven? Absolutely not.

The clear message of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is that all mankind have been “chosen to salvation” by the God who would “have all men to be saved...” (1 Tm 2:4), who is “the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe” (4:10), and whose Son “gave himself a ransom for all” (2:6). The fact that one has been “chosen” to salvation does not mean that one has been predestined for heaven, but that one is a sinner, and all sinners have the opportunity to believe the gospel—which most refuse to do.



Christ said to His disciples, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas...that should betray him..." (Jn 6:70-71). Clearly, the fact that Judas was one of those chosen to be a disciple did not guarantee that he would fulfill that calling. He was morally responsible to follow Christ by faith. Through his own choice, he did not do so and is now in hell.

The same biblical truth is demonstrated also in Israel: "The LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself..." (Dt 7:6). That "choosing" did not automatically assure that every physical descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would necessarily live the part. Unfortunately, Israel as a whole did not fulfill that calling but went into sin, and God had to cast her out of the land.

From these and other scriptures, it is clear that being "chosen" to salvation does not *bring* salvation: one must still believe the gospel in order to be saved. That fact is further made clear by the rest of the verse: "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Though "chosen to salvation," the *means* of salvation is not the choosing by God, but it is the individual's "belief of the truth."

**Question:** In your book, *A Woman Rides the Beast*, I noticed that you don't make any reference to some key passages about Mary: Lk 1:28, 48; Rev. 12. Why not?

**Answer:** In Luke we read: "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women...from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." I had no intent to avoid these passages and no reason to do so. They contain nothing that would in the remotest way support the false position to which the Roman Catholic Church has elevated Mary.

The fact that Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus when He was born into the world is the clear teaching of the Bible. That she should, therefore, as Christ's mother, be highly favored and blessed among all women is only reasonable as well as biblical and is not denied in any degree by true Christians. To recite these undisputed facts would have been irrelevant to the message of the book.

The claims in Roman Catholicism that Mary was conceived and lived without sin, that she was bodily taken into heaven without dying, that she helped to redeem us with the sorrows of her heart in concert with Christ's sufferings on the Cross, that all grace flows from God to Christ and from Christ through Mary to mankind, that she is the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of Mercy, that prayers should be offered to her as the mediatrix between men and Christ, that she is the Mother of and in charge of the Church, that she obtains whatever she

asks from Christ now in heaven and therefore we ought to go to her with our needs, etc., etc., are all false, and none of them has any support whatsoever in the verses you cite nor in any other part of Scripture.

As for Revelation 12, here again the Roman Catholic Church defies both Scripture and logic in its claim that the "woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" is Mary. The apparitions of Mary (all of which are demonic) have at times appeared in this form in support of this false doctrine.

It is quite clear from Scripture that the "woman" depicted here is symbolic of Israel, through whom the Messiah had been promised and would come into the world. The "great red dragon," of course, is Satan, who has sought to destroy the Messiah down through history by destroying all Jews. These attempts are recorded in the Bible (Pharaoh's decree that all male babies should be killed upon birth—Ex 1:16; Queen Athaliah's attempt to destroy "all the seed royal" when Joash was hidden from her—2 Ki 11:1; the attempt by Haman to have all Jews killed—Est 3:8-15; Herod's attempt to kill the Messiah—Mt 2:16, etc.). Secular history also offers proof of Satan's determination to destroy all Jews: the destruction of Jews by the Roman Catholic Church, by Muslims upon the decree of Muhammad, by Hitler, the intent to destroy Israel today, etc.

There is no question that Mary could not possibly be the woman in Revelation 12. She never "fled into the wilderness [into] a place prepared of God" (12:6). Furthermore, she does not fit the false Mary of Roman Catholicism who was without sin. Pain in childbirth was pronounced by God upon all women as a result of sin. Yet this woman "being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" (12:2). How could she be the sinless Catholic Mary?

## News Alert

*Jewish World Review*, 11/7/05: **WAKE UP, EUROPE, YOU'VE A WAR ON YOUR HANDS**, BY MARK STEYN [EXCERPTS]—As Thursday's edition of the *Guardian* reported in London: "French youths fired at police and burned over 300 cars last night as towns around Paris experienced their worst night of violence in a week of urban unrest."

"French youths," huh? You mean Pierre and Jacques and Marcel and Alphonse?... It doesn't take much time in les banlieues of Paris to discover that the rioters do not think of their primary identity as "French": They're young men from North Africa growing ever more estranged from the broader community... and wedded ever more intensely to an assertive Muslim identity more implacable than anything you're likely to find in the Middle East.

After four somnolent years, it turns out finally that there really is an explosive "Arab street," but it's in Clichy-sous-Bois....

For half a decade, French Arabs have been carrying on a low-level intifada against synagogues, kosher butchers, Jewish schools, etc. The concern of the political class has been to prevent the spread of these attacks to targets of more, ah, general interest. They seem to have lost that battle....

The French have been here before: Seventy-three-two. Not 7:32 Paris time...but 732 A.D. By then, the Muslims had advanced a thousand miles north of Gibraltar to control Spain and southern France up to the banks of the Loire. In October 732, the Moorish general Abd al-Rahman and his Muslim army were...within 200 miles, just south of the great Frankish shrine of St. Martin of Tours. Somewhere on the road between Poitiers and Tours, they met a Frankish force and...this one held its ground "like a wall ...a firm glacial mass," as the *Chronicle of Isidore* puts it. A week later, Abd al-Rahman was dead, the Muslims were heading south, and the French general, Charles, had earned himself the surname "Martel"—or "the Hammer."

Poitiers was the high-water point of the Muslim tide in western Europe. It was an opportunistic raid by the Moors, but if they'd won, they'd have found it hard to resist pushing on to Paris, to the Rhine and beyond. "Perhaps," wrote Edward Gibbon in *The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*, "the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet." There would be no Christian Europe. The Anglo-Celts who settled North America would have been Muslim....

Battles are very straightforward: Side A wins, Side B loses. But the French government is way beyond anything so clarifying. Today, a fearless Muslim advance has penetrated far deeper into Europe than Abd al-Rahman. They're in Brussels, where Belgian police officers are advised not to be seen drinking coffee in public during Ramadan, and in Malmo, where Swedish ambulance drivers will not go without police escort.... "There's a civil war under way in Clichy-sous-Bois at the moment," said Michel Thooris of the gendarmes' trade union Action Police CFTC....

If Chirac isn't exactly Charles Martel, the rioters aren't doing a bad impression of the Muslim armies of 13 centuries ago: They're seizing their opportunities, testing their foe, probing his weak spots. If burning the 'burbs gets you more "respect" from Chirac, they'll burn 'em again, and again. In the current issue of *City Journal*, Theodore Dalrymple concludes a piece on British suicide bombers with this grim summation of the new Europe: "The sweet dream of universal cultural compatibility has been replaced by the nightmare of permanent conflict." Which sounds an awful lot like a new Dark Ages.

## Dave & T.A.'s Itinerary

Jan 11-15 (Dave)	Calvary Chapel Finger Lakes Farmington NY (585) 398-3550
Jan 27- 29 (Dave & TA)	Calvary Chapel TriCity Tempe AZ (480) 345-6200
Feb 6-7 (TA)	Fellowship of Bible Churches Men's Retreat Mercersburg PA (301) 739-4245
Feb 24-25 (Dave)	Bible Skeptics Conference Whitby ON Canada (905) 655-8381
Mar 3-5 (Dave & TA)	Word of Life Winter Wrap-up Schroon Lake NY (518) 532-2289
March 8-10 (Dave)	Prophecy Conference Allentown PA 610-395-3613 ext 17
March 19 (Dave)	Bayside Community Church Tampa FL (813) 837-6007

## Letters

### Dear Tom,

I read your lead article in this month's *Berean Call*, and while I agree with all you attempt to convey, I think we ought to have genuine sympathy for the many folks who end up in these groups [12-Steps programs] because that's all they know or have been advised to do—join a group. The general church population is greatly ignorant of the Word's deeper teachings and how God himself intends for each one...to know Him (and His answers) by seeking Him alone (Psalm 62:1,2)...The people who participate in Celebrate Recovery are being spoon-fed bits and pieces of spiritual truth but not getting to know God for themselves....Anyone who becomes saturated with the Word of God cannot fail to find God and know His deliverance....Jesus came to set the captive free...why aren't these verses passed on by those who host Celebrate Recovery?...Only the power of the Holy Spirit can set us free from all our sins and hang-ups. MN (SD)

### Dear Dave and Tom,

After just hearing Joel Osteen on *Good Morning, America*, I had to tell you how very much I appreciate both of you for rightly dividing the Word of truth. Osteen endeavors to make sinners comfortable and has no idea whose side he is on.... Those of us who know the truth thank God that He has given us men like you who are not afraid to teach the truth. JW (KY)

### Dear Friends,

I would like to comment on the "quotable" from Tozer in the Sep '05 *Berean Call* newsletter. Both of the following appear to be biblically true: 1) God elects (chooses) from the foundations of the

world those to be His in Christ, and 2) Those who are the elect will freely choose Jesus as Lord and Savior, which is the condition for salvation. In order for these two statements to be compatible (non-contradictory), God's choice cannot be independent from the choice of the elect individual. With God, time is not a constraint, so that God's choice involves knowledge of the propensity of our choice. Can we conclude that it is simply not in God's nature to choose someone who would not choose Him under the circumstances He offers us for salvation? This, to me, implies our free will is very much free (even though God knows the outcome of our exercise of free will) and we remain fully accountable for the choices we make under the circumstances God both allows and orchestrates. LM (CA)

### Dear Brother Dave and all at TBC,

Thank you for your important ministry in these last days. Truly Judgment Day is approaching, and sadly, America has lost her way and will be judged with all other nations gathered against Israel. Upon finishing your article on the soon-coming judgment in *TBC* (June, '05), I had to stop what I was doing and just say thank you, Dave, and all at the Call, for your excellent ministry...sounding out in a world full of lies....Thanks for your uncompromising stand upon the Word of God. CP (CA)

### Dear Dave,

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, unto which thou art also called and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:12).... Since we have been receiving your *Berean Call*, our hearts have been made aware of the dangerous trends as they choke the clear teachings of the Word of God. Thank you for your diligent research and clear analysis. We pray for His protection and provision for your vital ministry. RB (WA)

### Dear Dave and Tom,

We are definitely in the last days and the apostasy is growing. It is encouraging that there are still people like you who stand for the truth....Dave's book *Judgment Day* is the best I have read on Islam and the end times. I wish that President Bush and all congressmen had a copy. DP (IL)

### Dear Dave and T.A.,

Finally, a defense of Ephesians 2:8-9 (Q&A Sep '05). I was given *Grace Unknown* (by Sproul) by a man supporting Calvinism. I could not get through that book—there were just too many discrepancies in light of Scripture and one of those being the maligning of Ephesians 2:8-9. My husband is Greek (from Thessalonika) and well trained in the classical language. He is born again (a term loathed by the

Orthodox Greeks) and loves to study God's Word. He concurs wholeheartedly with your translation of Ephesians 2:8-9, a fact I shared with the man who gave me Sproul's book. LG (SC)

### TBC,

Please cancel any further mailings. How good of our church, Mr. McMahon, in graciously welcoming you to our CRS (Celebrate Recovery Summit) 2005 so you could return to Oregon to tear our church and programs apart (*TBC* Oct '05). We do believe in the Bible and live by His Word! SW (CA)

## TBC Notes

### Ephesians 4:7-18

As I've been editing our long-overdue video production (available early next year) titled *Psychology & The Church: Critical Questions...Crucial Answers*, it has grieved me greatly to see how far the evangelical church has drifted away from the Word of God in attempting to remedy everyday problems of living. Actually, in the last couple of years, the "drift" has turned into a torrent. The way the world thinks and does things has captured the hearts of growing numbers of the shepherds as well as their sheep. Seemingly, most of it has been to the delight of the majority of Christendom.

Psychological counseling is only one of the world's attractions for which the church has readily queued up. There's also marketing, church-growth strategies, and entertainment—most of it Christianized enough to convince the evangelical flock that the straw offering has spiritually nutritious value. The reality is, however, much of it is salmonella to a believer's growth in Christ.

The test of this is rather simple. Just as the health-conscious read the ingredients of the food products before they buy, biblical believers only need to thoughtfully and prayerfully check the ingredients of what is being offered to them against God's Word.

The Apostle Paul and other inspired writers of the Scriptures warn us against what the world is "cooking up." He exhorted the Ephesians to "walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph 4:17-18).

Pray that the Lord will turn back his true sheep who are drifting from His Word!

T. A. McMahon  
Executive Director

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## Book Reviews: "Heavenly" Clues? — and Blue Suede Shoes

Each month at TBC, our staff comes in contact with a sizable number of books (new and old)—both for research purposes and for possible inclusion in our resource section. Most of the books that we have read and recommend, we are able to make available to our readers, while those that do not make the "cut" are often never mentioned. Monthly articles and "Extras" do refer to, and excerpt, many books and authors we critique, but time and space simply do not allow detailed reports. Here are a couple of recent titles that caught our attention for a closer look.

### Heaven by Randy Alcorn (Tyndale House, 2004)

Reviewed by Edwin Newby, TBC Staff

Since Dave Hunt published *Whatever Happened to Heaven?*, a number of books have sought to tell us not only "what happened," but "what's happening." Randy Alcorn's book *Heaven* is an expansion of what he calls his "surprising and unconventional" views of heaven. This most recent book was prompted by reaction to his thoughts on heaven, some of which initially cropped up in his popular novels, *Deadline* and *Dominion*.

First Thessalonians 5:21 says, "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Recognizing that traditional ideas and myths drive conceptions of heaven, Alcorn points to Scripture. This is good. Do saints in heaven wear long robes, have wings, and play harps while sitting on clouds? The author assures us that "by the time you finish reading this book, you will have a biblical basis for envisioning the eternal heaven" (p. 17).

Perhaps the greatest problem in the book is the idea that saints in heaven are conscious of events on the earth and are praying specifically for those who are still there. Not one scripture directly supports this. Reliance upon speculation about perceived implications drives many of the author's concepts. For example, Alcorn uses the "witch of Endor" account (1 Samuel 28:5-25) to speculate that Samuel has been actively observing Saul from the "other side." Yet, Samuel asks Saul why he has been "disquieted." Further, his words are limited to his previous prophecies (1 Samuel 15:28), with 1 Samuel 28:19 being the sole exception. It, however, is certainly not prompted by direct observation of Saul, but something revealed to Samuel by the Lord.

Many speculations follow. Alcorn states (p. 70) "Earth is center court, center stage, awaiting... Christ's return and the establishment of his kingdom. This seems a compelling reason to believe that the current inhabitants of Heaven would be able to observe what's happening...." Compelling? Samuel was disquieted to be returned to earth. Would it not be correct to ask how comforted one would be to see every death or apostasy of one's children, friends, and relatives?

"Precious" in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints (Psalm 116:15). Alcorn notes that Christ watches what transpires on earth and that "there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repents.... If angels, why not saints?" Well, saints are neither angels nor Christ. Alcorn tries to make "in the presence" of angels mean that others are rejoicing. Yet, the original words used can literally mean "in the faces of angels."

Finally, 1 Corinthians 2:9 tells us simply that it hasn't even entered "into the heart of man," what God has prepared for them that love Him. That's

in context. Verse 10 does not say that we now know by the Spirit every detail of heaven. The "them" in "God hath revealed 'them' to us" is in italics.

Yet, Alcorn is correct in saying that this "revelation is God's Word" (p. 19), which brings us back to Scripture, with no room for dogmatic speculation. What Scripture *does* say is that heaven is a place where people are comforted, tears are wiped away, perfect peace rules, and joy abounds forevermore. It also allows us to say to those who claim to have seen heaven in a vision, "Heaven is better than anything that you saw."

Alcorn is concerned that of the 100-plus commentaries that he owns, there is very little written about the details of Heaven. We would submit that this is wisdom on the part of those saints.

### Velvet Elvis by Rob Bell (Zondervan, 2005)

Reviewed by Rob Yardley, TBC Board Member

Rob Bell is hip, he is cool, he is cutting edge... and he is dangerous.

Bizarre, unbiblical doctrines squirm in the pages [of *Velvet Elvis*] like maggots in a long-dead animal. I'll touch on just a few of his statements and references, but I hope they will sufficiently warn the potential reader.

After mocking those who insist on foundational doctrines like a literal creation week, Rob Bell says, "What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archaeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was really just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births?" (p. 26).

The virgin birth isn't essential? Bell later affirms that he holds to the virgin birth, the Trinity, and the inspiration of the Bible, but indicates that there are no foundational doctrines.

Bell doesn't limit his blasphemy to the inerrancy of the Scriptures. He also attacks the sufficiency of the Scriptures:

"This is part of the problem with continually insisting that one of the absolutes of the Christian faith must be a belief that 'Scripture alone' is our guide. It sounds nice, but it is not true. In reaction to abuses by the church, a group of believers during a time called the Reformation claimed that we only need the authority of the Bible. But the problem is that we got the Bible from the church voting on what the Bible even is. So when I affirm the Bible as God's Word, in the same breath I have

to affirm that when those people voted, God was somehow present, guiding them to do what they did. When people say that all we need is the Bible, it is simply not true" (p. 67-68).

After overthrowing the Protestant reformation (and showing his ignorance of the true church throughout the ages), Bell turns to showing his ignorance of faith: "I have been told that I need to have faith in God. Which is a good thing. But what I am learning is that God has faith in me" (p. 134).

Even though Bell doesn't trust the Scriptures, it doesn't keep him from poor exegesis. He says, "I was reading last year in one of the national newsmagazines about the gathering of the leaders of a massive Christian denomination...they had voted to reaffirm their view of the importance of the verse that says a wife's role is to submit to her husband. This is a big deal to them. This is what made the news. This is what they are known for. What about the verse before that verse? What about the verse after it? What about the verse that talks about women having authority over their husbands? What about all of the marriages in which this verse has been used to oppress and mistreat women? It is possible to make the Bible say whatever we want to, isn't it?" (43-44).

We can make the Bible say whatever we want? I shouldn't be surprised that a man who doesn't believe in the power of God's word would espouse such folly. Incidentally, the verse he references as granting women authority over their husbands is footnoted as being 1 Corinthians 7:4; of course it does nothing of the sort.

I could cite many other problems, e.g., Bell says, "As one of my favorite writers, Anne Lamott, put it..." (p. 54). Anne Lamott is a noted Democratic Party activist and writer for liberal *Salon Magazine*, hardly someone you would want to recommend.

I don't think that spending any more time on this subject would be edifying. Zondervan not only publishes, but heavily promotes this book. In footnote 65, author Bell cites Zondervan vice-president Stan Gundry as an authority on why the Bible canon cannot be trusted. Ironically, or perhaps hypocritically, Zondervan, the self-proclaimed "Leading Christian Communications Company," derives the lion's share of its income from publishing bibles that "cannot be trusted," including the Catholic New American Bible, complete with the Apocrypha as part of its canon.

In the wider scheme of the growing apostasy, and shameful though it is, *Velvet Elvis* is sadly just one more example of how evangelicals are being fed a diet that is systemically weaning them away from their trust in the Word of God.



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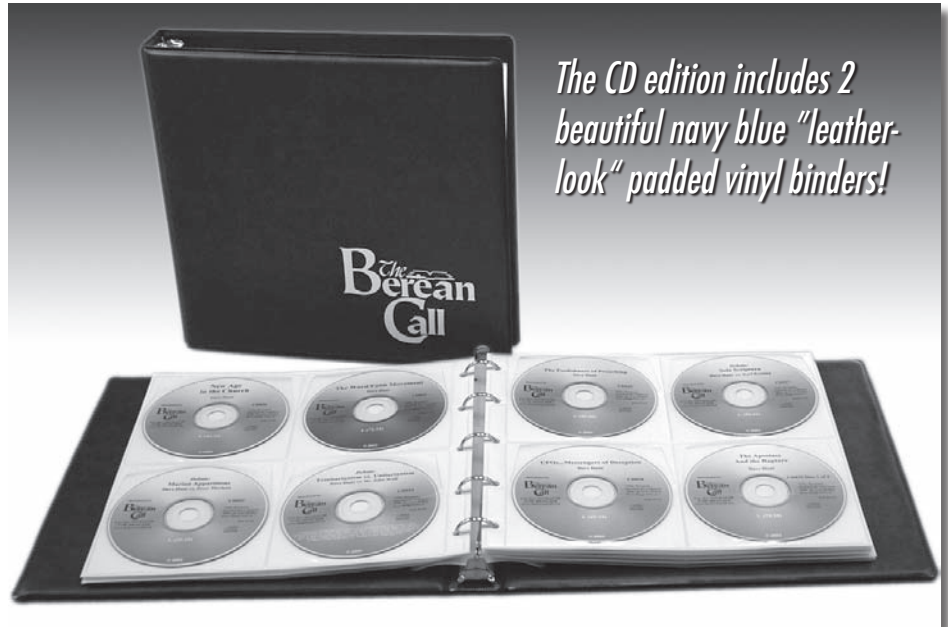
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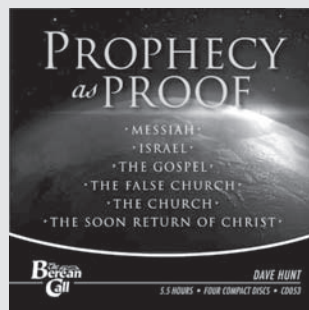
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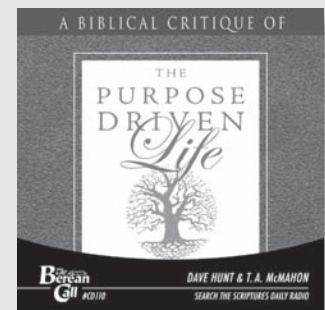
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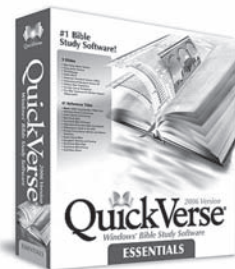
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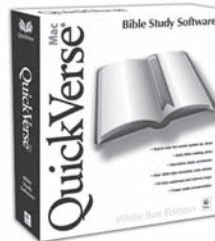
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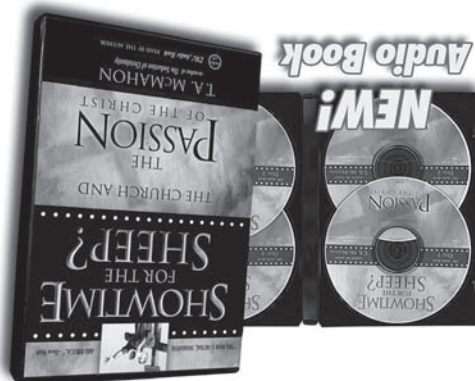
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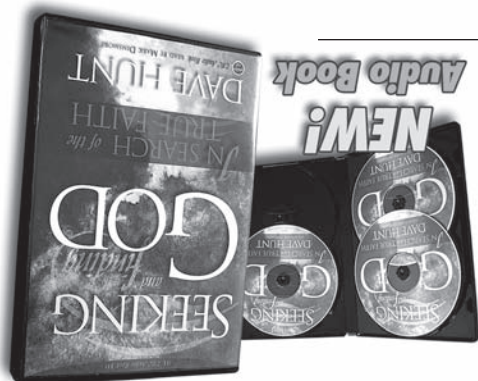


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