



“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 27, No. 6

June 2016

A NATURAL PROGRESSION OF EVIL

Adam C. Good

For decades, America has been in the throes of a wholesale breakdown in morality. When iniquity is not regularly exposed in the light of the Scriptures in a loving but uncompromising fashion, Truth loses its hold on the minds of men and women.

HOMOSEXUALITY predominates the media. We hear a lot about LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) and same-sex marriage. In the recent past, national attention focused on state legislatures and the whirlwind of controversy unleashed as laws were proposed legalizing or restricting same-sex marriage. In June 2015, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling that declared state bans on same-sex marriage unconstitutional. In recent months, the transition of Bruce Jenner into “Caitlyn” captured national attention. The issue of transgender rights has assumed the place previously held by same-sex marriage. As the 2016 election season progresses, presidential candidates will speak out in favor or in condemnation of such practices. Conservative religious groups have responded to these developments with alarm as many wonder what is happening to America. What they fail to realize is that the moral standard set forth in the Bible has already been abandoned in so many other areas that the culture’s growing embrace of LGBT perversion is a natural progression.

While same-sex marriage is a serious issue worthy of grave concern, where is the corresponding outrage over a host of similar moral issues

that defile the national character? Religious groups may expose homosexuality as the transgression of God’s Law that it is, but few will proclaim the Bible’s teaching concerning all forms of fornication with equal courage and conviction. Fornication, any sexual act outside of a God-approved marriage, is condemned throughout the New Testament (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5-6). Homosexuality is an example of fornication, but all heterosexual acts outside of marriage also receive divine censure with equal force. The necessity of adhering to the whole counsel of God and examining oneself for hypocrisy is of paramount importance. Many more souls will find themselves eternally exiled from the presence of the Lord for engaging in heterosexual forms of fornication than for practicing homosexuality.

Why is it the case that the majority of religiously minded Americans fail to address all violations of Biblical morality? Conservative groups currently face little backlash from their memberships for condemning homosexuality because few among them are culpable. As a result, no undue cost is incurred for opposing it. Yet other forms of fornication, such as promiscuity and unscriptural divorce and remarriage, are issues that apply

to the majority of American families. In the interest of not alienating attendees and with the intent of not offending the wider community, those portions of God’s Word dealing with these matters receive diminishing attention from the pulpit. When instruction does occur, religious leaders soften the message and devise soothing justifications. Sadly, not every congregation of the church of Christ can be exempted from these allegations.

When iniquity is not regularly exposed in the light of the Scriptures in a loving but uncompromising fashion, Truth loses its hold on the minds of men and women. The neglect and outright twisting of Biblical teaching concerning heterosexual fornication has resulted in a dramatic transition in the overall American mindset to the end that these sins have become accepted. Far worse, they have become unquestioned assumptions for multitudes of people who have forgotten how to blush (cf. Jer. 8:12). In time, the fervor over homosexuality will similarly dampen for the majority of Americans and it will likewise become accepted, assumed, and unquestioned. National surveys concerning homosexuality indicate that this rev-

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Progression of Evil...



Editorial...

THE RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

Garland M. Robinson

How reliable is the Bible? To be sure, it's the only perfect book the world has ever known or will know. But, how do we know the Bible we have today is the same as it was 2,000 years ago? That's a valid question. If the reliability of the Scriptures is in question, then doubt might be placed on its veracity/accuracy. Therefore, an examination of the following should provide sufficient evidence for even the strongest doubter.

The historical reliability of the Scripture should be tested by the same criteria that all historical documents are tested. They are the "bibliographical test," the "internal evidence test" and the "external evidence test." The "bibliographical test" is simply an examination of the textual transmission by which ancient documents exist today. In other words, not having the original documents (penned by inspired men) available to us, how reliable are the copies that exist of these original texts? What about the number of manuscripts (MSS) and the time interval between the original and extant (existing, surviving) copies?

It is declared by B. B. Warfield (professor of theology at Princeton Seminary from 1887-1921) that the facts show the great majority of the New Testament "has been transmitted to us with no, or next to no, variation: and even in the most corrupt form in which it has ever appeared, to use the oft-quoted words of Richard Bentley, 'The real text of sacred writers is completely exact;... nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost... choose as awkwardly as you will, choose the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings'."

It can safely be said that the number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writings of that time period, is so large that it is certain that a true reading of every passage has been

preserved. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world.

Scholars are satisfied we possess the true texts of the principle Greek and Roman writings of Sophocles (Grecian play writer), Thucydides (Athenian historian and general), Cicero (Roman philosopher, orator), Virgil (Roman poet), etc.; yet our knowledge of their writings depends on a mere handful of manuscripts, whereas the manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundreds and even thousands.

There are some 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and at least 1,000 for other early versions. Add another 4,000-5,000 Greek manuscripts and we have 13,000-14,000 copies of portions of the New Testament. In addition to this, much of the New Testament can be reproduced from the quotations of early Christian writers.

One noticeable fact between the manuscripts of the New Testament and those of antiquity is the time span between the originals and the extant copies. The chart below shows this time span in regards to ancient works of antiquity generally accepted by academia today.

Concerning the evidence of the New Testament, we find that it was completed by the end of the first century A.D. Among the 13,000 manuscripts and fragments, we list here a

few of the more prominent copies. The **Codex Sinaiticus** (350 A.D.) is located in the British Museum in London and contains almost all the New Testament and dates within 254 years of the original. Also at the British Museum is the **Codex Alexandrinus** (400 A.D.). It contains almost the whole Bible and dates to within 300 years of the original. The **Codex Vaticanus** (325-350 A.D.) is located at the Vatican Library in Rome and contains nearly the whole Bible and is within 229-254 years of the original. The **Chester Beatty Papyri** (200 A.D.) is located in the Chester Beatty Museum in Dublin, Ireland and dates within 100 years of the original. The **Bodmer Papyrus II** (150-200 A.D.) is in the Bodmer library of World Literature in Geneva and dates within 50-100 years of the original. The **John Ryland fragment** (130 A.D.) is located in the John Ryland Library in Manchester, England. It is the oldest fragment of the New Testament and dates within one generation of the original.

Biblical evidence is overwhelming. The text of the New Testament has far more substantiation than any one piece of historical literature, yet so many wish to cast doubt on it. Why not apply the same test for the Bible as is applied to any other piece of historical literature?

Another case in point involves the **Dead Sea Scrolls** discovered in the Qumran caves on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. They are dated from the last three centuries B.C. through the first century A.D. and are made up of some 40,000 inscribed fragments. From these, more than 500 books have been reconstructed. Their discovery in 1946-1956 has helped to establish the accuracy and

| AUTHOR | WRITTEN | EARLIEST COPY | TIME SPAN | COPIES |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|--------|
| Caesar | 100-44 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1,000 yrs. | 10 |
| Plato | 427-347 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1,200 yrs. | 7 |
| Tacitus | 100 A.D. | 1,100 A.D. | 1,000 yrs. | 20(-) |
| Pliny (younger) | 61-113 A.D. | 850 A.D. | 750 yrs. | 7 |
| Thucydides | 460-400 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1,300 yrs. | 8 |
| Suetonius | 75-160 A.D. | 950 A.D. | 800 yrs. | 8 |
| Herodotus | 480-425 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1,300 yrs. | 8 |
| Sophocles | 496-406 B.C. | 1,000 A.D. | 1,400 yrs. | 100 |
| Lurretius | died 55-53 B.C. | | 1,100 yrs. | 2 |
| Catullus | 54 B.C. | 1,550 A.D. | 1,600 yrs. | 3 |
| Aristotle | 384-322 B.C. | 1,100 A.D. | 1,400 yrs. | 5 |

reliability of the Bible. A complete manuscript of the Hebrew text of Isaiah was found. The importance of this discovery is in the exactness of the Isaiah scroll (dated at 125 B.C.) compared with the oldest previous text then in existence (dated at 916 A.D.), a thousand years later. This demonstrates the unusual accuracy of the copyists of the Scriptures over a thousand year period.

The following quote was taken from a book entitled “A General Introduction to the Bible” by Geisler and Nix:

Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, there are only 17 letters in question. Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as conjunctions. The remaining three letters comprise the word “light”, which is added in verse 11, and does not affect the meaning greatly. Furthermore, this word is supported by the LXX and 1 Q Is. Thus, in 1 chapter of 166 words, there is only one word (3 letters) in question after a 1,000 years of transmission — and this word does not sig-

nificantly change the meaning of the passage.

Gleason Archer states that the Isaiah copies in the Dead Sea find “proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text. The 5% of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”

It is a matter of wonder that through something like a thousand years, the Biblical text went through no meaningful change. When all the facts are known and compared, we have overwhelming evidence for the accuracy and reliability of the Bible we hold in our hands today. It is indeed the very Word of God!

God says through Isaiah (55:8-11), “For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ⁹For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither; but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: ¹¹So shall **my word** be

that goeth forth out of my mouth: it **shall not return unto me void**, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it.” Jeremiah 1:12, “Then said the LORD unto me...I will hasten my word to perform it.” Psalms 119:160, “Thy word [is] true [from] the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments [endureth] for ever.” Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” Mark 13:31, “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.” Second Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Men through the ages have sought to destroy God’s word (cf. Jehoiakim, Jer. 36). However, they are dead and gone but God’s Word still stands. It will always stand. It is the very word that will be used to judge all of humanity in the last great judgment day (John 12:48; Rev. 20:12). Are you ready for that day? You will be there!

Progression of Evil...

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olution in opinion is underway and that it is accelerating in pace.

The moral issues confronting the nation are legion: fornication in all its varied forms, abortion, lasciviousness, and sensuality that parades itself in the media and on the street. For decades, America has been in the throes of a wholesale breakdown in morality. Yet, these problems are merely symptoms of the underlying malady that infects the heart of the United States and other nations as well. Although compliance with Biblical morality is not sufficient to be pleasing and acceptable to God on its own, in times past, the majority of Americans generally adhered to Biblical principles or at least acknowledged their rightness.

Obedience to God’s way edifies a nation since He alone knows what is best and proper for mankind (Prov.

14:34; Jer. 10:23). Over time, humanistic and atheistic reasoning, as expressed in theology, the media, and in academia, have eroded the convictions of men and women regarding the Bible’s veracity and importance. As the role of religion continues to decline in American life, the moral codes predicated upon it are rapidly fading and losing their relevance. Now, **millions no longer accept the Bible as God’s inerrant, divinely inspired, and authoritative revelation**. Instead of a climate of respect and reverence, the Bible is routinely derided and denounced when it is referred to at all. With the Scriptures cast aside as the regulator of human behavior, ever shifting human opinion now determines right and wrong. With their moorings to Truth frayed and broken, the beliefs of so many Americans are adrift on the wind. Consider the principle of Ephesians 4:14 which says, “That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of

doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive).”

It is repugnant to even contemplate the triumph of homosexuality in America and around the world. Yet, because every other moral sin has triumphed in the public square, it is a natural progression for even this issue to ultimately prevail. Moral chaos is the result when Truth is forsaken. The Scriptures demonstrate that nations who turn from God decline further and further. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, [and] all the nations that forget God” (Psa. 9:17). “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin [is] a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34).

Consider the example of Israel and Judah. The kings of these two nations (such as Jeroboam and Ahab) followed their own hearts and lead their people in departing from God’s standard (1 Kings 12:25-32; 16:29-34). In compassion, the Lord sent prophets without number to instruct and to

guide His people back to the path of righteousness. These messengers were routinely disregarded and persecuted for their efforts. Occasionally, a leader such as Hezekiah or Josiah, would arise who would fight valiantly against the darkness. Notwithstanding their zeal, they could only slow the moral decay and spiritual apostasy of the realm during their lifetimes. Once a people have wholly lost respect for God, as demonstrated by their attitude and their response to His Word, nothing can be done to save them. Having rejected God, judgment is inevitable. Yet, it remains the responsibility of God's servants to continue to proclaim His Truth steadfastly for only He knows when a nation has passed beyond reclamation (Isa. 6:8-12).

It has been thought that divine providence championed the founding and the rise of the United States in order that the church of Christ might take root and thrive. Satan ever seeks to tear down anything that promotes righteousness or which tends in the direction favored by the Lord. He will use everything in his arsenal to corrupt nations whose disposition is favorable towards the Gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ. As Satan worked through the Roman Empire in the first century to oppose the Faith, so he strives to exert his malevolence today. God calls upon His people, the church, to hold up the teaching of His Word and expose all error (1 Tim. 3:11; Eph. 5:11).

The church is not charged with saving a country or a culture, but with presenting the Gospel to souls, individual by individual. The church evangelized and made disciples in morally depraved Corinth where many of the sins plaguing the United States today ran rampant (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Christians can do the same today to the glory of God.

Source material at: www.seektheoldpaths.com/stop616.htm

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ASA: A GOOD KING OF JUDAH

1 KINGS 15; 2 CHRONICLES 14-16

Joe W. Nichols

In considering the twenty rulers [19 kings, 1 usurper] of Judah [975-586 B.C.], only seven proved to be "good" kings. Among those designated as "good" is Asa who reigned during the divided kingdom: "And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel [10 tribes of the North], began Asa to reign over Judah" (1 Kings 15:9). Asa reigned for forty-one years [955-914 B.C.] and the Bible says, "And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father" (v.11). Asa accomplished much in restoring the dignity of the people of God before the Lord.

Asa's reign was contemporary with Baasha of Israel who had overthrown the house of Jeroboam (who had corrupted the worship of the ten tribes of the North). The Bible says, "And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days" (1 Kings 15:16). Asa called on Benhadad king of Syria to honor the League made between their fathers and with gifts of silver and gold persuaded him to intervene on behalf of Judah in the war against Israel.

Asa's notable actions as king of Judah are worthy of our consideration and to be commended for our day:

- 1) He commanded the people to seek the Lord and do the law and the commandments (2 Chron. 14:2).
- 2) He gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those that sojourned out of Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon to sacrifice unto God in Jerusalem and to seek the Lord with all their heart (2 Chron. 15:9).
- 3) He removed all the idols from the land that his father Abijam had made in causing the people to sin (1 Kings 15:12).
- 4) He put away the sodomites out of the land (1 Kings 15:12).
- 5) He removed his mother Maacah from being queen because she had made an image to the Asherah [female goddess]. The Bible says that he made dust of it and burned it at the brook Kidron (2 Chron. 15:16-17). Zerah the Ethiopian came

against Judah "with an army of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots into the valley of Zephathah" (2 Chron. 14:9-10). "And Asa cried unto the Lord...Lord, there is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength: help us, O Lord, our God, for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude" (2 Chron. 14:11). We read further and learn, "So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled...and there fell of the Ethiopians so many that they could not recover themselves, for they were destroyed before the Lord and His host; and they carried away much booty" (v.12).

Asa wavered somewhat in his character during his latter reign. The Bible says that he relied on the king of Syria rather than on God, and also allowed the Syrian host to escape out of his hand. God sent Hanani the seer to him reminding him of his victory over the Ethiopians and the Lubim (a huge host), saying, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. 16:9). In a rage, Asa imprisoned Hanani and oppressed some of the people (v.10). Sadly, in the remaining three years of his reign, he found himself sorely diseased in his feet and "in his disease, he sought not God, but to the physicians" (v.12). Ultimately, this led to his demise (v.14). Seemingly, in giving an overall picture of Asa's life and work, the Bible says, "nevertheless, the heart of Asa was perfect all his days" (2 Chron. 15:17).

There is much to learn from the "good" kings of Judah. We would desire that our present-day rulers learn their godly traits. How much better than to suffer the bitter consequences of the rulers, who according to Bible history, turned away from God resulting in unsuspecting multitudes being led into eternal destruction.

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GOD TAKES GREAT DELIGHT IN THOSE WHO ARE TRUTHFUL

Marvin L. Weir

One is not truthful who claims to love God but refuses to heed His Word for answers regarding spiritual matters. Christ said to His apostles, *“If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). One who does not love the Lord cannot be saved, and one who does not keep the Lord’s commandments does not love Him. It is therefore a lie to claim to love the Lord while keeping the commandments of men. A so-called faith without love cannot save one’s soul. One who desires to go to Heaven must remember that *“in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love”* (Gal. 5:6). A person seeking to save his soul will also remember that the apostle Paul said *“let God be true, but every man a liar”* (Rom. 3:4). It is thus nothing more than a lie for one to declare his love for God while steadfastly refusing to obey His Word.

Solomon experienced all this world has to offer. The life he lived enabled him to be acutely aware of both the good and the bad. He knew what would be profitable to a person as well as what would prove to be a detriment to one’s peace of mind and true happiness. Thus, the wise man said, *“Lying lips [are] abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly [are] his delight”* (Prov. 12:22).

Our society, at least in years gone by, thought that lying is that which children should not do. It is true that young folks need to speak the truth, but so do adults. It is utter folly for adults to engage in lying while insisting their children tell the truth.

There is no sin more common today than the sin of lying. Lying has become a way of life in the oval office, the halls of Congress, the school-rooms, and the home. Even in the spiritual realm most prefer a lie instead of the truth. If people do not have a love for the truth, God will send *“them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie”* (2 Thess. 2:10-11). May a study of the subject of lying encourage us to speak and

obey the truth!

In the minds of many people nothing comes so easy as lying. Without any thought or effort, lies freely flow from some people’s lips. Some children get lots of coaching and practice from an early age. A father goes fishing or golfing but leaves instructions with the children to tell his employer that he is sick and has gone to the doctor. When some parents do not wish to speak to someone on the phone, they tell their children to say they are not at home. Children quickly learn that in certain situations it is preferable to lie rather than tell the truth.

Christians are admonished to speak the truth! It is reasonable to expect that worldly people will lie when it is to their advantage. It is also reasonable to expect a child of God to always speak the truth. Such is not always the case, however, because psychology and worldly wisdom has influenced some folks more than the Holy Bible.

Paul tells Christians to *“lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds”* (Col. 3:9). A child of God is supposed to be a “new creature” in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). But if the situation warrants it or the circumstances encourage it, many members of the body will not hesitate to lie. The great lesson to be learned is that the “situation ethics” mentality and the “end justifies the means” philosophy are false. God has never been pleased with those who do not speak the truth. A lying tongue has always been that which God hates; and, He declares it an abomination (Prov. 6:16-17).

Lying is an abomination to God because His great enemy is the father of lies! Jesus told the Pharisees of His day, *“Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it”* (John 8:44). Satan

has again and again distinguished himself by wearing the title of liar. Since the devil has been called the “father of lies,” the willful liar is testimony of his parentage. One who willfully lies confirms to all humanity that his allegiance is to the devil!

Lying is the exact opposite of God’s nature! The Old Testament declares, *“God [is] not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do [it]? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good”* (Num. 23:19)? The New Testament is also quick to remind us that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

Truth comes from God (John 8:40), and Christ testifies that His Word is truth (John 17:17). It is truth that will free one from the bondage of sin (John 8:32), and it is truth (Word of Christ) that will judge all people in that Day (John 12:48).

There will be no liars in Heaven! The apostle John says that all liar’s will have their part *“in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone”* (Rev. 21:8). John also notes that outside the gates of the Heavenly city *“[are] dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie”* (Rev. 22:15). The apostle Paul declares that whoremongers, and them that defile themselves with mankind, liars, and perjured persons are contrary to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10). In regard to heaven, John notes: *“there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie”* (Rev. 21:27). The caliber of people that will keep liars company throughout eternal torment shows God’s disdain for this sin (cf. Rev. 22:15).

May it be said of those who call themselves children of God that they will not deal falsely with God nor their fellowman (cf. Isa. 63:8).

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UNDERSTANDING GRACE #6

(GRACE TEACHES US)

Bill Boyd

*The salvation we have by the grace of God is salvation FROM sin;
it is not salvation IN sin.
The grace of God does not negate the need for repentance.*

As in all his epistles, Paul begins his letter to Titus with a salutation of grace. Titus 1:4, “Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.” And so also he closes, “Grace be with you all” (Titus 3:5). Grace is as much a part of God’s nature as is love (1 John 4:8,16); and when it comes to eternal salvation, what our loving God has provided by grace is for all. Titus 2:11, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” But salvation is not by grace alone because it is evident that all are not saved. Neither does grace excuse sin.

The salvation we have by the grace of God is salvation FROM sin; it is not salvation IN sin. The grace of God does not negate the need for repentance. Those who teach that grace excuses sin are among those “ungodly men” who would turn “the grace of our God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4). They preach the lie of Satan who said from the beginning, “ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). Rather, having appeared to all men, grace expects a response, and God, by his grace, has taught us what that response should be. Titus 2:11-14, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

We find in this text seven things that grace teaches us.

1) **Grace teaches us to “deny ungodliness.”** Ungodliness is a disregard for God. It does not require ac-

tive defiance. Passive disregard is sufficient. In Psalm 1:1 David writes of “the counsel of the ungodly.” He is talking about those who have no regard for God. As in Psalm 10:4, “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.” And as in Psalm 14:1, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” Certainly it is foolish to deny the existence of God, and that is ungodly, but read the verse carefully and note that the words, “there is,” are in italics indicating they are not in the text but supplied by the translators. Read without the supplied words the verse says, “The fool says in his heart, No God.” This leads to the question, Who is the bigger fool? Is it the one who denies that God exists, or the one who, knowing there is a God, refuses him? The refusal is not just with the mouth; it is with the heart. God is not in his thoughts. Psalm 10:4, “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.” The book of Proverbs presents a contrast between the “wise” and the “fool.” It is not a contrast between the intelligent and the simpleton. It is a contrast of attitudes toward God. The wise man is the man that acknowledges and reveres God. The fool is the man that does not have God in his thoughts. To “deny ungodliness” as he tells us to do, is to put God and his will in the context of all we think and do.

2) **Grace teaches us to “deny... worldly lust.”** Lust is desire, and desire itself is not wrong, but this is worldly lust, the desire of worldly things, and in this context, the desire of the evil things of this world. James 1:14-15, “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin,

when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” First John 2:15-17, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” Our response to God’s grace takes place in the heart. It is not enough to deny yourself evil worldly things, but to deny yourself the evil worldly desire of those things. Colossians 3:1-5, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

3) **Grace teaches us to “live soberly.”** This means we are to live thoughtfully, seriously, putting your flesh under the control of your mind. Either your flesh is going to rule you, or you are going to rule your flesh. The reason some people say, “I can’t help myself,” is because they have lost control of themselves. They may not believe they can control themselves, but they can. The mind of man is part of the spirit of man, and the spirit is stronger than the flesh. In Romans 8:1 Paul tells us, “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” To walk after the Spirit it is bring the passions of our flesh under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it means to live soberly, thoughtfully, mindfully.

4) **Grace teaches us to “live...righteously.”** This means to live in accordance with God’s commandments. Psalm 119:172 says, “*all thy commandments are righteousness.*” The expectation of grace for us to live righteously is reinforced by these two similar passages: First Timothy 6:11, “*But thou, O man of God...follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*” Second Timothy 2:22, “*follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*”

5) **Grace teaches us to “live...godly.”** We have discussed ungodliness above, and in contrast to ungodliness, this is living a life of reverence and respect for God. It is the life of a man that worships, and carries with him from the worship, a reverence toward God that is seen in all he does. That does not mean all of life is worship, but it does mean all of life is to be lived with the reverence toward God that we have when we are gathered for worship. Without a life of reverence, worship is hypocrisy.

6) **Grace teaches us to look for the appearing of Jesus Christ.** Titus 2:13, “*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” Grace teaches us hope. Sometimes this world looks hopeless, but it is not, there is always hope. Ultimately, our hope is for the Lord’s appearance and return. “*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all those that love his appearing*” (2 Tim. 4:8).

On the side, I want to mention something that is evident in Paul’s expression above. There is a rule of Greek Grammar that is called the “Granville Sharps Rule.” It states that when you have two descriptive nouns which are not proper names (such as Cephas, or Paul, or Timothy); and the two nouns are connected by the conjunction “and;” and the first noun has the article, “the,” while the second does not, then both nouns are referring to the same person. In Titus 2:13 the nouns “God” and “Saviour” are not names, so they are not proper nouns, and the article, “the,” is before the first noun “God,” but not before the second noun “Saviour.” That

means “*the great God*” and “*our Saviour*” are referring to the same person, and the person is identified as “Jesus Christ.” That makes Jesus God. The “Jehovah’s Witnesses” deny that Jesus is God, but Paul (inspiration) affirms that He is!

7) **Grace teaches us to be “zealous of good works.”** Titus 2:14, “*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*” One who is “zealous” is one with a burning desire, and these “good works” embrace all our obligations to God and man. Notice the contrast in Titus 1:16 between those who are “*unto every good work reprobate*” and those in Titus 2:14 who are “*zealous of good works.*” The word “reprobate” means they are failures, and in this contrast those who are zealous are accomplishing the good works that grace expects from them, and therefore they are obedient to God in all things.

Titus 3:4-7 teaches us that man cannot merit his own salvation through works of righteousness. “*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*” But this does mean that man is not responsible for his works, for the very next verse says, “*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men*” (Titus 3:8). It is only when man tries to force a false doctrine of grace without obedience into these passages that they appear in conflict. Good works do not earn salvation, but grace expects and demands a response of good works (Titus 2:11-14). Good works are not meritorious, but they are to be carefully maintained (Titus 3:4-8).

The grace of God teaches us to respond, and it teaches us how to respond. Titus 3:5, “*according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the*

Holy Spirit.” That is water baptism. If you want the benefit of the grace of God that bringeth salvation, then you must believe and obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ and live in accordance with what it teaches. “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*” (1 Cor. 15:58).

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| Beginning Balance | \$7,385.58 |
| Contributions | \$1,700.00 |
| Correction | \$5.00 |
| Debits | |
| Postage | \$1,727.33 |
| Paper | \$1,875.00 |
| Supplies/Ink..... | \$156.00 |
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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

Psalm 6:6, “I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.”

Every time you blink, you bathe the surface of your eye with a astonishing fluid called *tears*. Tears are not simply a salty water solution. They are made of water, but also have oils, electrolytes and sticky carbohydrates called mucins. In addition, they contain antibacterial and antiviral substances. One of these substances is called lysozyme. Any bacteria or virus that finds itself in tear fluid has a 95 percent chance of being dead within ten minutes. That blink of an eye keeps the surface of the eye properly moisturized so that our vision remains clear. Without this moisturization, your eyes would become red and painful, and, if untreated, you would probably go blind. Tear fluid also provides needed oxygen to the surface of your eyes.

But perhaps the most amazing property of tears is even more unexpected. Humans are the only creatures that cry emotional tears. Studies have shown that the ability to cry and produce tears actually helps us cope with emotional situations. There are some inherited diseases which make people unable to cry tears. Studies have shown that people with this disease cannot deal well with stress.

Tears are a blessing in many ways. But we also remember that God has promised to wipe away all our tears when we reach heaven.

— *Creation Moments*

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked “not for publication.” The church building is located at: 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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