

Dear Friend,

There is great affection for the Papacy in the age in which we live. Likewise, there is great interest in those who have embraced the Papacy. It is important that we analyze Scott Hahn's route into apostasy since he has influenced many. The article below sounds the alarm on the consequences of such apostasy, and in doing so, outlines the Gospel and its biblical foundation.

I ask that you respond in prayer and forward the article to others. I request also, if possible, that you post it on your Webpage.

Yours in Christ Jesus and for the Gospel,
Richard Bennett

Scott Hahn's Route into Apostasy

Scott Hahn, a former Presbyterian pastor, is currently being touted as a hero in the Roman Catholic world. The text critiqued in this article is the transcript of his conversion story, "The Scott Hahn Conversion Story: Protestant Minister Becomes Catholic" as it appears in the Catholic Adult Education on Video Program, prominently featured on the Coming Home Network.¹

His premise

Hahn's premise in this first video is "I came to see the Roman Catholic Church to be the family of God that He wants all of His children to share in."² The style of the video is casual and anecdotal. References are made to books of the Bible, but often texts and their exact references are not cited. While Hahn presents some of the centuries old doctrinal differences between biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism, he shows how through his experiences he turned away from the authority of the Bible to embrace standard Roman Catholic arguments and practice.

Testimony of his conversion

In Section 1, "Teenage Conversion to Jesus", Hahn says that he did not grow up in a strong Christian family and was not very religious. He then cites a Young Life outreach in which he claims that the Gospel was shared with him. He states that it made a profound difference in his life. "Early in my high school years I made a commitment and I asked Jesus Christ into my heart; I asked Him to be my savior and Lord. I gave Him my sins and I received the gift of forgiveness and salvation." What Hahn has stated here as his salvation experience is that he made a commitment to Jesus Christ "to be his savior and Lord". A friend got him to read Luther and Calvin and with that, Hahn began witnessing to his Catholic friends because he had become "convinced that up until the 1500's the Gospel had almost been lost amidst all the medieval

¹ Coming Home network is designed specifically to draw Protestant pastors in particular into the Roman Catholic fold. <http://www.chnetwork.org/scotthconv.htm> 10/23/06

² Introductory section. Because this is a transcript of a video presentation, we have cited the sections rather than our pagination. In this series, there are twenty teaching videos with study guides.

superstition and all the pagan practices that the Catholic Church had adopted.” He wanted his Catholic friends

“to see the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ, to show them the Bible, and to show them that in the Bible, you just accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and that’s all it takes. None of this claptrap: Not Mary, not the saints, not purgatory, not devotions, just asking Jesus to be Savior and Lord.”

What Hahn has stated here, “you just accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and that’s all it takes,” is not a statement of the Gospel. Hahn is recounting for his Roman Catholic audience that at that time in his life he believed that none of the Catholic works items was necessary for salvation; yet nowhere in this opening video is the Gospel given. The Gospel is not commitment or human works righteousness of any kind; rather it is that God’s righteousness has been revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.³ The Gospel is the demonstration—in concrete historical fact—of the perfect satisfaction which Christ rendered to all the demands of the law, and which God places to the credit of every true believer in Him. Before God’s all Holy nature, sin had to be punished and true righteousness established. This has been accomplished in the faithful obedience of the Lord Christ Jesus and His propitiatory sacrifice. Thus Christ’s faithfulness is proclaimed by the Apostle Paul, “*even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.*”⁴ When the Bible declares that justification is God’s gift to the believer, it also shows in few words what justification is. Justification is found in and of Christ. It is the demonstration of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, even unto death. Such perfect rectitude is of God, and from God, “*even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.*” The great news is that this absolute righteousness is “*unto all and upon all them that believe.*”⁵ This essential factor of the Gospel is not found in what Hahn said; rather he gives a tradition works message that commitment can save a soul.

Face to face with Roman Catholicism in practice

Hahn relates that of his family only his grandmother was Catholic but she was a devout one, “very humble, very holy...[At her death] I went through her prayer book and her missal, and then I found her rosary beads. All this stuff just made me sick inside. I knew my grandmother had a real faith in Jesus, but I wondered what all of this could mean....That was the second aspect of my own outlook: that these people [Roman Catholics] might have some faith but it was just surrounded by lies, and so they needed loving Bible Christians to get them out.” What Hahn cannot comprehend at this point is the confusion of justification with sanctification which the Roman Catholic Church teaches and which his grandmother presumably lived out with her missal, rosary beads, and other effects. Good works for justification is the foundation on which Roman Catholicism is built because for Papal Rome justification is internal and, with few exceptions, exclusively granted through her sacramental system. Thus she states, “The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized [person] sanctifying grace, the grace of justification....”⁶ In Scripture, however, justification is credited or imputed to believer, as Scripture clearly states in chapters 3 and 4 of Romans and elsewhere. Hahn’s error on this particular issue is his door into Roman Catholicism. Although he states in Section 1 “By the time I was finishing high school, I

³ Romans 3:20-26

⁴ Romans 3:22a

⁵ Romans 3:22 “*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.*”

⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), Para. 1266.

had gone through the Bible two or three times in its entirety. And I had fallen in love with Sacred Scripture,” on the crucial issues of justification and imputed righteousness he has failed to grasp what the Bible clearly states.

Issue of Sola Fide

Upon finishing high school, Hahn decided to pursue both ministry and theology because he had written a paper entitled “Sola Fide”, which he explains means

“Faith Alone or By Faith Alone...He [Martin Luther] said that we are justified, we are made right with God by faith alone, not by any works that we might do. And for him that was the article on which the church stands or falls...I wrote that research paper fully convinced after much study that, if you get it wrong on this point, you get it wrong on everything else. If you say faith plus anything, you have polluted the simple Gospel. And so I went into college with this strong conviction.”

Here Hahn has shown that the issues of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone were familiar territory to him.

His own admission and subsequent actions show, however, he did not really believe that to which he had initially given intellectual assent. In Section 3, entitled “Seminary Years”, he tells of going to Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Boston where he took his Master’s Degree and of the “landmark experiences” which occurred at that time. First, his wife got into an ethics class involving the issue of contraception. Both Hahn and his wife were smitten by the arguments of a Roman Catholic author, with whom they came to agree. Of the Roman Catholic author, Hahn relates,

“From the Bible, from the covenant, he [the Roman Catholic author] showed that the marital act is not just a physical act; it’s a spiritual act that God has designed by which the marital covenant is renewed. And in all covenants you have an opportunity to renew the covenant, and the act of covenant renewal is an act or moment of grace. When you renew a covenant, God releases grace, and grace is life, grace is power, grace is God’s own love...in a marital covenant, God has designed the marital act to show the life-giving power of love...[t]he child who is conceived, embodies the oneness that God has made the two through the marital act...God said, ‘Let us make man in our image and likeness,’ and God, who is three in one, made man, male and female, and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply.’ The two shall become one and when the two become one, the one they become is a third child, and then they become three in one...By the time I finished the book, I was convinced.”

Such writing apparently piqued Hahn’s interest in covenants. His second “landmark experience” shows the further development of this interest. In his final year at seminary, a crisis arose for him as he was studying covenants. He found that another theologian, Professor Shepherd of Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia) who was becoming suspected of heresy. Hahn had come to the same conclusions that Shepherd had, namely,

“In the Protestant world the idea of covenant is understood practically as synonymous with or interchangeable with contract. When you have a covenant with God, it’s the same as having a contract. You give God your sin; He gives you Christ, and everything is a faith-deal for salvation. But...I came to see that...in a contract you say, ‘This is yours and that is mine,’ but Scripture shows how in a covenant you say, ‘I am yours and you are mine.’ Even when God makes a covenant with us, He says, ‘I will be your God and you will be my people.’

After studying Hebrew, I discovered that ‘Am, the Hebrew word for people, literally means, kinsman, family...So covenants form kinship bonds which makes [sic] family with God.” Concerning justification, nothing could be further from the truth. Hahn here is emphasizing the family aspect of covenant and teaching that the legal aspect of covenant is not really a major part of salvation. First, he presents what he sees as the church’s understanding of covenant as a contract and then makes his case for covenant meaning family.

The pivotal Scriptural truth, however, is that salvation is on an individual basis and not based in family or group *per se*. Rather God who is rich in mercy puts squarely before people the primary problem which each individual has before Him as the All Holy God, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*”⁷ The Lord God sent His only begotten son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die for the sins of those who by grace would believe on Him alone for their salvation.⁸ Christ Jesus lived the perfect life and died the perfect death to propitiate the wrath of God for the sins of His people. These are the individuals of whom the Apostle Paul says, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.*”⁹ Nevertheless, Hahn says,

“I came to the conclusion that sola fide is wrong....Nowhere did the Holy Spirit ever inspire the writers of Scripture to say we’re saved by faith alone. Paul teaches we’re saved by faith, but in Galatians he says we’re saved by faith working in love. And that’s the way it is in a family isn’t it? A father doesn’t just say to his kids, ‘Hey, kids, since you’re in my family and all the other kids who are your friends aren’t, you don’t have to work, you don’t have to obey, you don’t have to sacrifice because, hey, you’re saved. You’re going to get the inheritance no matter what you do.’ That’s not the way it works. So I changed my mind [on sola fide].”

What is it that convinces Hahn to change his mind? Certainly it was not a study of the Bible texts on justification, but rather his own idea of how an earthly family might work. Although Hahn does not cite any exact reference, there is no verse in Galatians which says that salvation is by “faith working in love.” The verse to which he is most likely referring is Galatians 5:6, “*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*” The problem that the Apostle Paul addressed was that believers were turning away from the Gospel to a false gospel of works. In the first three chapters of the letter, the Apostle proclaimed that those who are saved are “*in Christ*”. “*This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? ...Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith....*”¹⁰ The Apostle showed that no one can be made right before Holy God by works of the law—“*by which no man is justified,*”—but by grace through faith alone.

⁷ Romans 1:18

⁸ John 1:13; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:4-7

⁹ Ephesians 2:8-9

¹⁰ Galatians 3:2-8

One cannot be in Christ unless he is saved by grace through faith alone.¹¹ The Apostle then showed that faith will indeed work by love, this is parallel to Ephesians 2:10 where faith results in good works. Hahn has misrepresented the message of Galatians. It is ironic that Hahn himself has turned from the Gospel proclaimed throughout the Bible to a false gospel of works. What Hahn has presented is classic Roman Catholic confusion and argument.

Ephesians 2:8-9 denied

His next step is to add works to faith. He states,

“For Luther, in other words, salvation is a legal exchange, but for Paul in Romans, salvation is that, but it’s much more than that. It isn’t just a legal exchange because the covenant doesn’t point to a Roman Courtroom so much as to a Hebrew family room. God is not simply a judge; God is a father, and his judgments are fatherly...Christ is not just somebody who represents an innocent victim who takes our rap, our penalty; His is the firstborn among many brethren...And by the new covenant Christ doesn’t just exchange in a legal sense; Christ gives us His own sonship so that we really become children of God....So I came to the conclusion that sola fide is wrong....Nowhere did the Holy Spirit ever inspire the writers of Scripture to say we’re saved by faith alone. Paul teaches we’re saved by faith, but in Galatians he says we’re saved by faith working in love.”

By confusing justification with sanctification Hahn manages to jettison sola fide, the biblical fact that justification is by grace alone and received by faith alone. Hahn is dead wrong when he says, “Nowhere did the Holy Spirit ever inspire the writers of Scripture to say we’re saved by faith alone.” The Bible clearly states that salvation is of grace and is **not** of works so that no man can boast, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.*” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Growth of Hahn’s man-centered approach

In Section 4 Hahn speaks of his pastorate, showing that having disposed of “sola fide”, he now deletes preaching in favor of performing the Eucharist. He states, “I said, ‘Instead of being sermon-centered, why not have a sermon be a prelude and a preparation to enter into celebrating who we are as God’s family?’” Thus Hahn led his congregation into man-centered emphasis on the physical family through appealing to pride the love of ritual.

In Section 5 Hahn tells how he continued to expand his man-centered approach as he taught his seminary students in a study of the Gospel of John,

“I discovered in my study that being born again does not mean accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord...I discovered what Jesus meant in John 3 when He said that you’ve got to be born again...As soon as He is done talking to Nicodemus about the need to be born from water and Spirit, the very next verse says that Jesus and the disciples went about baptizing. I taught that being born again is a covenant act, a sacrament, a covenant renewal involving baptism.”

The words of the risen Christ contradict the statements of Hahn, “*he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”¹² Faith is the key of saving

¹¹ Summarized in Romans 3:28, “*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*” Clearly seen in Romans Chapters 3 and 4, Ephesians chapters 1 and 2 and elsewhere.

¹² Mark 16:16

grace, and unbelief is the chief damning sin.¹³ Faith is what is necessary for salvation while baptism is an ordinance that follows faith and simply testifies to it. Proof of this is found in what the second half of the verse omits: it is NOT “he that is not baptized shall be damned,” but rather “*he that believeth not.*” Faith is so indispensable that though one is baptized yet believes not, he shall be damned. The sinner is condemned because of his sin nature and his personal sin. God’s divine justice is upon him; nothing can propitiate God’s justice but saving faith in Christ alone. This faith, by God’s grace, instantly brings God’s act of justification. The sacramental message of Hahn not only deceives people but also mocks both the justice and grace of the Lord God.

Accepts Roman Catholic Eucharist

Hahn moves immediately from teaching this heresy to John 6:55. His comment on it,

“I had been trained to interpret that [verse] in a figurative sense; Jesus is using a symbol. Flesh and blood really is just a symbol of His body and blood. But the more I studied, the more I realized that that interpretation makes no sense at all...He [Jesus] didn’t mean it figuratively...[rather] we actually have to eat His flesh and drink His blood...I discovered that Jesus never used the word ‘covenant’ in His public ministry. He saved the one time for when He instituted the Eucharist and he said ‘This cup is the blood of the new covenant.’ If covenant means family, what is it that makes us family? Sharing flesh and blood. So if Christ forms a new covenant, that is a new family, what is He going to have to provide us with? New flesh and new blood. I began to see why in the early Church for over 700 years, nobody any place disputed the meaning of Jesus’ words.¹⁴ All of the early Church fathers without exception took Jesus’ words at face value and believed and taught the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.”

What Hahn teaches is simply false. It was in the ninth century that a Benedictine monk taught such a doctrine.¹⁵ Nonetheless the new doctrine fermented and grew in the Church of Rome. Finally the notion of “transubstantiation” was officially proclaimed as a dogma of faith, necessary for salvation, at the Lateran Council under Pope Innocent III in 1215 A.D. Present day Rome continues to teach this medieval tradition.

In John 6 eating the flesh denotes trusting on the Lord

The Lord explained that He is going to give His flesh for the life of the world. “*The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*”¹⁶ Here Christ Jesus presents Himself not only as the One who came down from Heaven, but also as the One who had come here to die. To give His flesh was to offer Himself as a sacrifice, to voluntarily lay down

¹³ See also Hebrews 4:2-3.

¹⁴ Peter Allix, writing in the 17th century to refute the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meaux, shows that from the beginning through 9th century, the churches of Piedmont followed the Bible in taking communion as a commemoration. There is no evidence whatsoever that these ancient churches knew anything of what Hahn calls “the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist”. Their sermons show they could not have held such an unbiblical view. Later, because they did not, they were horribly martyred by the Papacy in the centuries of the Inquisition, which did not begin until the 13th century. Peter Allix, *Churches of Piedmont* (1690, 1821) in *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont and of the Albigenses* (Gallatin, TN 37066: Church History Research & Archives, 1989 reprint).

¹⁵ Paschasius Radbert published a treatise in 831 A.D., “Concerning the Body and Blood of Christ”. He held that the bread and wine used in the Lord’s Supper were by consecration converted into the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁶ John 6:51

His life. *“Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”*¹⁷ This speaks of the essential requirement of faith in Christ Jesus the Lord. It is so serious that if one does not trust in the Lord’s sacrifice on the cross, he will not have eternal life. Eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man signifies trusting on the Lord in His sacrifice. Christ Jesus accomplished all the benefits of redemption: pardon from sin, acceptance with God, the adoption as children of God, access to the throne of grace, and eternal life. Receiving this by faith is aptly called eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Eating His flesh and drinking His blood is being by faith totally identified with Him. His sacrificial death must be appropriated by faith if men are to be saved. “Eating” is equivalent to “believing” and confirms the central theme of what He proclaimed which He summarized as, *“He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”* (John 6:47)

It is noteworthy that Hahn has accepted so blindly the idea that the Lord’s body and blood could be in any physical sacrifice today when the Bible very clearly states not to believe anyone who says that He is here or He is there.¹⁸ This is because He is now seated *“at the right hand of the Majesty on high”*¹⁹ and that there is now no more sacrifice for sin.²⁰ Yet Hahn does not touch these aspects of the Roman Catholic Mass, that it is claimed to be precisely an offering for sin in which Christ Himself is offered again and again, denigrating completely the Lord Christ’s own offering of Himself once and for all. Hahn has not accepted the authority of the Bible on these issues, for the Bible is not Hahn’s ultimate authority.

Attacks authority of the Bible

Hahn attacks the fact that the Bible alone is the ultimate authority. He takes up the silly argument that the Bible does not say specifically that it is the only authority. He carefully lays out his own argument against the Bible as the ultimate authority by showing how others argued the point to him. But Hahn never answers their arguments with any Bible verses. Rather he quotes other men who themselves do not believe that the Bible alone is the ultimate authority. Hahn sums up one such exchange by recounting his conversation with another theologian with whom he obviously agrees,

“But professor [I said]...what we are saying then is that we should only believe what the Bible teaches, but the Bible doesn’t teach us to only believe what the Bible teaches. Our assumption isn’t taught by the Bible...That feels like we’re cutting off the branch that we’re sitting on.’ Then he said, ‘Well, what other option do we have?’ Good point, all right.”

The Lord Jesus Christ declared clearly the truth of God’s Word. He said, *“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* God’s Word not only contains the truth but it is Truth itself. This is consistent with the declarations throughout the Old Testament in which the Holy Spirit continually proclaimed that the revelation from God is truth. Christ Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they placed their tradition on a par with the Word of God. He condemned them because they were attempting to corrupt the very basis of truth by equating their traditions with the Word

¹⁷ John 6:53

¹⁸ Matthew 24:26

¹⁹ Hebrews 1:3

²⁰ *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”* Hebrews 10:12, 14

of God. He declared to them that they were “*making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered.*”²¹

Since the Scripture alone is inspired, it alone is the ultimate authority. It alone is the final judge of all human traditions and reasonings. The Word of the Lord teaches, “*Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*”²² It then immediately commands in the next verse, “*Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*” This teaching and command show emphatically that it is God’s Word alone that is pure and uncontaminated. The truth is this: since God alone breathes out His written Word, it—and it alone—is the sole rule of faith. It cannot be otherwise. Any church that contradicts Scripture or attempts to assign to it an inferior position in the life of faith may safely be accounted as a liar and deceiver bent on moving God off His throne so that it may occupy the position of absolute authority itself.

The term “Sola Scriptura” or “Scripture alone” is short hand for saying that Scripture is the only point of reference for finding out what is to be believed about God and what God requires of man. The very phrase “Scripture says” means that it is exclusively transcribed, and not hearsay. The command to believe what is written means we are to receive only the pure Word of God. It separates out from all other sources that body of truth which a person is to believe. At stake is God’s incorruptible truth. For men, what is at stake is certainty, which is revealed in the words of Proverbs 22:21, “[*To*] *know the certainty of the words of truth.*” Certainty is needed for the salvation of immortal souls. In the very last commandment in Scripture, God resolutely commands that no one is to add to and no one is to take away from His written Word.

Misidentifies church of I Timothy 3:15

Hahn’s next imaginative hypothesis is his assertion that the Papal Church is pillar and foundation of truth. Hahn argues his own case by conversation with men who apparently are unable to cite and adequately defend what the Bible says. In this incident, he gets into a discussion with another theologian over what is the pillar and foundation of truth, to which the man states that it is the Bible. Hahn then asks him, “Then why does the Bible say in I Timothy 3:15 that the pillar and foundation of truth is the church, the household of faith?” The man has no biblical answer but rather asks which church would qualify. Hahn finishes by saying “I only know of one. I only know that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that it was founded by Christ; it’s been around for 2000 years and it’s making some outlandish claims that seem awfully similar to I Timothy 3:15.”

In fact, the Church of Rome is utterly excluded from what is stated in I Timothy 3:15, because the church in question upholds the truth. The superstitions and empty rituals of Papal Rome make it an impossible reference for the Apostle Paul. The text itself states, “*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and stay of the truth.*”²³ The focus of the verse is on the

²¹ Mark 7:13

²² Proverbs 30:5

²³ I Timothy 3:15 “Stay” is alternate reading.

behavior of the believer upholding truth. In this passage the Apostle Paul is telling Timothy how he ought to behave in the local church at Ephesus.

Direct move into Roman Catholicism

The last several sections of the video recapture Hahn's direct move into full blown Roman Catholicism. In 1986 he went through the Roman Catholic rituals of conditional baptism, first confession, confirmation, communion and is now a professing Roman Catholic. He says that Mary is his mother and the Pope is his spiritual father.²⁴ The video ends with his telling of two resolutions he has made. The first is "to enter more deeply each day into the Mass and into this ministry that he [Pope John Paul II] has to pray for him...." The second resolution is to evangelize into the Roman Catholic Church, particularly Christians, to tell them "about our Holy Father [the present Pope]...the Blessed Virgin Mary...our own spiritual Mother, with Pope John Paul II to be a guide and a spiritual father-figure to lead all of us in worshipping our heavenly Father...but most of all, with the Holy Eucharist to know ourselves around the table as a household of God."

But since Hahn's identity is Roman Catholic, he cannot be a brother in Christ. For over four hundred fifty years, the Roman Catholic Church has consistently denied that on the authority of the Bible alone, salvation is by grace alone through faith alone and in Christ alone and to God alone be the glory. The Roman Catholic Church still upholds the heretical tenants of the Council of Trent even in her Vatican Council II documents and her *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Those who hold to the Roman Catholic doctrines and practices are not of the household of God. Scott Hahn is in for a rude shock.

Conclusion

To set aside personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and replace it by faith and confidence in the Mass, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Pope is fatal. This is the substitution of religion for a relationship with the living God. The rituals and pomp, fine architecture, captivating music, mysticism, charismatic experiences, visions and apparitions cannot fill the void that was meant to be filled by a Person, the Spirit of the living God.

*"The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."*²⁵ True Christians see God's power and boldly proclaim His grace, every individual who is saved is *"being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*²⁶ The Gospel is the chosen instrument that God uses to deliver His people from their sins. Thus it is proclaimed, *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."*²⁷ Sin is an evil of infinite significance since it is committed against an infinite Person. There is no way of escaping the wrath of God against sin except by His grace. The Scripture interprets grace as power. By this power redemption comes because it was by *"the grace of God"* that Christ tasted death for each true believer. In Scripture forgiveness of sins is proclaimed through His blood *"according to the riches of his grace."* ♦

²⁴ Section 7

²⁵ Romans 1:16

²⁶ Romans 3:24

²⁷ Ephesians 2:4-5

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