# A Book of Errors Revised (Marriage, Divorce)

By Hugo McCord
January 2000

My long time friend, John Edwards, in whose home in St. Louis I have been a guest, has a sympathetic heart toward people with marriage problems. But it is sinful to allow a sympathetic heart to alter Jesus' teaching, which he has done in his book An In Depth Study Of Marriage And Divorce. He sent me a copy, and I wrote to him to reconsider and to return to "the old paths" where he formerly walked.

Instead, in a second edition he has only revised the wording of his errors, saying that his book is intended to help those … involved in divorce to realize that God still loves them, and they do not need to live lonely, guilt-ridden lives (p. 13).

It is true that God still loves them, and will forever, but "fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). It is also true that fornicators and adulterers do not need to "live lonely, guilt-ridden lives," for "the Son of man has come to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). When in penitence they hate adultery and turn from it, they will be perfectly forgiven (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11) and will "rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. 4:4).

Everyone can go to heaven if he wants to do so, but Jesus said that some would have to "make themselves eunuchs" (Matt. 19:12). Apparently Jesus and John Edwards differ about that matter, for in a lengthy book of 203 pages John not once cited what Jesus said about eunuchs.

On page 15 John makes an admirable statement: "We need to search God's word for His answers." But immediately John

turns, away from His answers to an emotional appeal to the readers' heart to make them sympathize with the much married who have two or more sets of children, and wants the readers to despise any preacher who would refuse to baptize them. John the immerser refused to baptize those who did not quit their sinning (Matt. 3:8), but John Edwards will baptize those married and divorced for any reason. He makes preachers who respect Jesus' words about marriage and divorce worse than murderers, saying they are sending souls to hell!" He quotes a preacher as saying a woman who had had three husbands as having too many "to even think of going to heaven." The preacher was wrong. Any one can go to heaven who wants to do so, as I have already proved. I am sorry that John leaves the impression that the woman at Jacob's well who had had five husbands was on the way to heaven.

John calls undoing "past marital mistakes" an "Evil Tree, whose fruit is corrupt." But if, according to Jesus, a marital mistake causes one to "commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9), yes, to be living in adultery (Col. 3:5-7), what will make the tree and its fruit good? Paul tells how adulterers and homosexuals at Corinth made the tree and its fruit good: they "were washed were sanctified … were justified" (1 Cor. 6:11).

Though God allowed David to keep Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:27), and though God tolerated (cf. Acts 17:30) divorce for any cause and remarriage in the Old Testament (Deut. 24:1-4), and though he tolerated polygamy (2 Sam. 5:13; 1 Kings 11:3) in the Old Testament, that Old Testament has now been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). Then, the one of whom God said, "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5), made it clear that he repudiated polygamy (Matt. 19:4-5) and divorce (except for fornication) and remarriage (Matt. 19:9). What he said was directed to non-disciples (Matt. 19:3), but his disciples understood his "whosoever" as including everybody, and they were shocked, thinking that if marriage and divorce have such a rule, "it is not expedient to marry" (Matt. 19:10). John would have said that the number of

times one divorces and remarries does not matter (on p. 16 he cites an example of a woman who had six husbands).

However, Jesus thought that even one divorce and remarriage makes a difference, and that under some circumstances one must refrain from marriage, or quit a legal marriage, and make himself a eunuch by will power (Matt. 19:12).

On p. 18 John writes that the Bible says nothing about "adulterous marriages" or "living in adultery," but Matthew 19:9 is still in the Bible, saying that a certain divorcee on remarrying commits adultery, and Colossians 3:5-7 is still in the Bible, saying that some Colossians had formerly lived in adultery (cf. also Rom. 6:2; Eph. 2:3; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 4:2 on living in adultery).

On p. 18 John writes that "adultery in the gospel passages" is not "the physical sex act in marriage," but only "a violation of a covenant" (p. 50, and often). However, a covenant is broken in the first part of Matthew 19:9, "whosoever shall put away his wife." At the divorce he has broken his vow and his covenant, but according to Jesus (not John Edwards) he has not yet committed adultery, and does not until he remarries. Adultery in Jesus' eyes is not covenant breaking but is something that occurs after marriage.

On p. 21 John begins a discussion of Greek words, which is an admission that he needs something besides English translations to find his manufactured meaning of adultery. If we need to know Greek to understand marriage, billions of people are helpless.

In chapter 6 (p. 49-57) John, after citing figurative (Jer. 3:6-10) and mental adultery (Matt. 5:27-28), calls attention to the passive voice of moicheuthenai in Matthew 5:31-32. It is true the wife now discarded has not committed adultery, but in Jesus' eyes she has been "adulterated." The husband's breaking his covenant with her, Jesus does not call adultery,

but the husband has used her sexually and abandoned her, leaving her “adulterated.”

On p. 51 it is strange that John holds that moichatai in Matthew 19:9 is in the passive voice, for the verse would say, “Whosover divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, is adulterized.” Also he asserts that the same word in Mark 10:11 is in the passive voice, which would make the verse read, “Whosover divorces his wife and marries another is adulterized against her.” Those senseless renditions do not appear if one says that moichatai is in the middle voice, calling for an active meaning, “he commits adultery,” and “he commits adultery against her.” The parallel in Luke 16:18 uses the active voice, moicheuei, “he commits adultery.” If one wants the whole truth, and is not simply trying to prove what he believes, he will by all means check the parallel readings in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There is a way, by looking to ambiguous Greek grammar, and by checking only Matthew and Mark, to assert Matthew and Mark meant for moichatai to be taken as passive (though the resultant English translation is senseless) but the Greek grammar is not ambiguous in the word Luke wrote, moicheuei, and even John would say it could not be passive.

Further, to say that moichatai in Matthew 19:9 is point action (do you know of a commentator who says so?) would make adultery two legal steps (divorce and remarriage), and would declare that sex acts with the new spouse are not adultery. It is strange that Jesus used a word that commonly refers to a violation of the marriage bed and makes it refer only to two legal ceremonies. If the disciples listening to Jesus had understood that adultery is legal ceremonies, would they have said, “It is not expedient to marry”? According to John, it would be expedient to marry, with no risks involved: marriage would be easy to get into and out of. Some have seen a difficulty in giving moichatai a linear or durative meaning, because the physical act in adultery is not continuous.

However, the present tense in Greek not only can refer to point action (punctiliar) as in Matthew 13:14; 27:38, and to linear action (durative) as in Matthew 25:8; John 5:7, but also to iterative action (repetitive) as in Matthew 9:11, 14; 15:23; 1 Corinthians 15:31. Obviously if one is living in adultery the word iterative or repetitive is the correct description.

In John's search to find some proof of his thesis that adultery is covenant breaking, not sexual activity, he refers to Luke 16:18, "Every one who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery." However, if only the divorcing and remarrying ceremonies are the adultery, then if an innocent spouse divorces a spouse for fornication and remarries, that innocent person has committed adultery, for he or she has gone through the legal ceremonies that constitute adultery.

On p. 67f John quotes Greek scholars as saying that sometimes the present tense is point or punctiliar action, but it is noticeable that he quotes no Greek scholar who says that such is true of moichatai and moicheuei in Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18. Incidentally, John uses denominational terminology in saying that "Church of Christ teachers and leaders" take his position. One whom he quotes, Raymond Kelcy, says, "There's not a great deal to be had on the tense of that verb, Matthew 19:9," but John bases his whole thesis on the possibility that that verb might be punctiliar. Further, surprisingly, John quotes Kelcy, "A person who enters an illegal marriage, an unscriptural marriage, does continue to commit adultery," but according to John only the divorcing and remarrying constitute adultery, and that no one ever continues to commit adultery after marriage. Kelcy and John do not agree.

John quotes Carroll Osburn, but Osburn fails to say that Matthew 19:9 must be considered as punctiliar, yet John's thesis depends wholly on what Osburn does not say. Osburn holds that Matthew 19:9 is a "gnomic present," in which Osburn

says “continuity may or may not be involved.” A “gnomic present,” according to Ernest De Witt Burton, Moods And Tenses, p. 8, expresses “customary actions and general truths.” So, Matthew 19:9 expresses the customary action and general truth that a remarrying divorcee (except for fornication) commits adultery. Osburn fails to help John.

John also quotes from Jack McKinney, and got some help, for McKinney said that Matthew 19:9 expresses “point action” (p. 70). However, McKinney contradicted himself, for he also said (as had Osburn) that Matthew 19:9 is a “gnomic present.” He cannot be right both ways. If Matthew 19:9 speaks of “point action” it does not use the “gnomic present.” McKinney also misused the word aoristic, apparently thinking it means point action. But the word aorist says that an act is unspecified as to the kind of action (whether punctiliar, repetitive, or durative). A gnomic present can be aoristic (no specification of the kind of action), but it cannot be punctiliar.

John pleads his case that Matthew 19:9 must be punctiliar, for he says that “the best Greek scholars” are with him, but none that he quoted says that Matthew 19:9 must be punctiliar. Then John (p. 73) quotes a Greek grammar that “simultaneous action relative to the main verb is ordinarily expressed by the present,” but in the case of Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18 the action of the main verb is not ordinary: the action of the main verb is not simultaneous with the divorcing and the remarrying, for those actions are only legal ceremonies, and no lexicon or dictionary defines adultery as a legal ceremony. Adultery, a violation of the marriage bed, is not committed by divorcing and remarrying, but later. To interpret the gospel verses as point action is to eliminate adultery, for it is not committed in two legal ceremonies.

How refreshing in John’s book to come to chapter nine, “Homosexual Marriages” (p. 75-79). He is clear how sinful they are. But he is inconsistent. Homosexuals and lesbian marriage partners can appeal to John in exactly the same way he pleads

with his readers to approve those divorced and remarried unscripturally. I can hear homosexuals and lesbians turning John's words against himself: "Are we condemning people whom God wants to forgive? … let love and compassion rule over legalistic rules and judgments". (p. 18). They would say the same thing that John says, "Far worse than taking someone's life is sending their souls to hell! Christians, are you prepared to answer for the fruits of your teaching (against homosexuality) that drives people to hell?" (p. 16-17).

John is certain (p. 83) that God wants monogamy, and that Jesus pointed back to monogamy, but John on the mission field today would not teach polygamists to go back to monogamy.

John (p. 89) asks does divorce break the marriage? Legally of course it does, but it does not nullify the vow one made at his marriage to his spouse "until death doth us part." John's words on p. 93 have relevance here: "Our oral words mean just as much to God as our written documents." Jesus, not John, taught that a divorced person is not as free as a single person, for if a divorced (not for fornication) person marries, he commits fornication. Single people and divorced people are equal legally, but not in Jesus' eyes. John and Jesus disagree.

John (p. 95) says that "God recognizes the marriage dissolved when the spouse deserts the marriage," but Paul did not say that. In Paul's inspired words a deserted spouse does not any longer have a sexual obligation (a voluntary bondage, cf. 1 Corinthians 7:3-4, 15) to the former mate, but to interpret a deserted spouse (no fornication involved) as free to marry again is to contradict the Lord Jesus. Jesus did not give two reasons for divorce and remarriage, namely, fornication and/or desertion. Paul gave a release from marital obligation but he did not give a remarrying privilege.

It is refreshing to come to John's chapter fifteen, as he exposes the sins of pornography. But in the rest of his book

(p. 123-203) he is even more determined to prove a non-dictionary, arbitrary, self-made meaning of adultery, a meaning that will give comfort and peace to people that Jesus said are living in adultery. I would not want to be in John's shoes in the Day of Judgment. To destroy a weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is no light matter (1 Cor. 8:11). The first part of Romans 16:18 is not true of John and Olan Hicks, but the second part is true: "By their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent."

11625 SW Vacuna Ct.
Portland, OR 97219-8903

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# Questions & Bible Answers — Drinking of Intoxicants

By Roy Deaver

Vol. 103, No. 08

QUESTION

"Our preacher mentioned recently that with regard to the drinking of intoxicants the Bible does not demand total abstinence. In an effort to prove this position he cited Ephesians 5:18, and stressed the word 'excess.' Does Ephesians 5:18 teach that it is all right for one to drink intoxicants, so long as he does not do so to 'excess'?"

ANSWER

1. As is recorded in Ephesians 5:18, in the *King James* reading, Paul says: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;…"

It is alarming, frustrating, disappointing, and disgusting that some people who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ persist in efforts to try to justify the drinking of intoxicants. These often stress the words “moderation” and “temperance,” and we hasten to emphasize that such usage of these words is a MISUSE of these words. “Moderation” and “temperance” apply to that which is right within itself—not to that which is by its very nature sinful. Does anyone really believe that it is all right to practice sin in moderation? Suppose the thief should say to himself: “I would like to steal three automobiles tonight. But, I believe in temperance and moderation, and so—I will just steal one.” One can be “temperate” and “moderate” in eating, because eating is right. One can be “temperate” and “moderate” in sleeping, because sleeping is right.

2. Another word often misused in this connection is the word “social.” Reference is often made to “social” drinking. If the word “social” is intended to indicate a proper concern for society, then I can think of no words more paradoxical than the words “social drinking.” This is similar to talking about a “civil” war, or an “honest” thief, or a “white” blackbird, or a “sincere” hypocrite.

Further, what about the word “disease”? It is commonly claimed that alcoholism is a “disease.” As Peter L. Reamm recently pointed out: “If so, it is the only disease that is contracted by an act of the will. It is the only disease that requires a license to propagate it. It is the only disease that is bottled and sold. It is the only disease that promotes crime. It is the only disease that is habit-forming. It is the only disease that is spread by advertising. It is the only disease that is given for a Christmas present.”

3. In *The Spiritual Sword* of July, 1971, page 22, brother Guy N. Woods writes as follows: “In the light of these facts, it is indeed remarkable that there are those who attempt to justify ‘moderate drinking,’ and excuse ‘social’ drinkers.

Anything which corrupts that which it touches must be, and is, always wrong; and Christians ought to avoid all participation therein. Actually, it is through so-called moderate drinking that most people become alcoholics." Brother Woods also stresses that "Moreover, indulgence to any extent is wrong because drunkenness is a matter of degree, and begins with the first drop of the fiery liquid." He quotes Dr. Ralph Overman as correctly emphasizing: "When you have drunk one drink, you are one drink drunk!" Brother Woods says: "It follows—therefore— as a simple matter of common sense that one should never, under any circumstances, and for any reason, swallow one drop of alcohol for beverage purposes."

4. The problem now under consideration arises at least in part from a misunderstanding of Ephesians 5:18, and—behind this misunderstanding—lies a translation problem. Many words in our King James Versions do not mean in 1986 exactly what they meant in 1611. Please note that this statement is not a criticism of the King James Version, but is simply a statement of fact, and which points up the constant need for careful study. The English word "excess" as used in 1611 was an accurate rendering of the original. But, as the word "excess" is used in our day, its use in Ephesians 5:18 contributes to a misunderstanding of what Paul actually said.

According to the King James reading, Paul says: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The American Standard Version has: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the spirit." Paul, in this statement, is not discussing what drunkenness LEADS TO, but, rather, what is already, inherently, IN IT! And, what is inherently IN IT is given us in the word "excess" in the King James reading and in the word "riot" in the American Standard reading. But, the English word "excess" in 1611, following its Latin derivation, meant "loss of self-possession." In drunkenness (and in drinking) there is loss of self-possession. So, the Record says: "And be not

drunken with wine, wherein is loss of self-possession."

*5.* Upon this background, we turn now to look at the lexicons, translations, and other passages. The key word, so far as concerns the present study, is the Greek word *asotia.*

According to the lexicons, *asotia* means: (1) reckless debauchery (Green), (2) profligacy, incorrigibility (Arndt-Gingrich), (3) riotous living (Thayer), (4) an abandoned course (Berry). Barns refers to "that which is abandoned to sensuality and lust."

What about the translations? (1) We have referred to the King James reading and to the American Standard reading. (2) *The Living Bible Oracles* has "And be not drunk with wine, by which comes dissoluteness " (3) The *Revised Standard Version* has: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery…." (4) *The New English Version* has: "Do not give way to drunkenness and the dissipation which goes with *it."(5) Montgomery* has: "Do not be drunk with wine, in which is riotous living…." (6) *Williams* has: "Stop getting drunk on wine, for that means profligacy." (7) *The Pulpit Commentary* says: "And be not intoxicated with wine, wherein is dissoluteness." We keep in mind that Paul is not talking about what drunkenness leads to (though that is certainly involved). He is talking about what is IN it. And, what is IN it is identified and described by the Greek word *asotia.* About this word, Lenski says: "It describes the condition when the mind and body are dragged down so as to be incapable of spiritual functions."

How could anybody be in the condition (to any extent or to any degree) described by the Greek word *asotia,* and claim (with any degree of justification) to be pleasing to God? The etymological significance of this word, is—in fact—"without salvation."

As indicated earlier, we want to look at this word as it occurs in other passages. (1) We look at Titus 1:6. About an

elder, Paul says: "…having children that believe, who are not accused of RIOT or unruly." (2) It is used in 1 Peter 4:4. Peter says: "…wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess (flood) of RIOT, speaking evil of you:…" (3) Then, in Luke 15:13, *asotia* is used in adverbial form. The prodigal son "…took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living" (literally, living riotously).

6. The notion that Ephesians 5:18 teaches that it is all right in the sight of God for one to drink intoxicants so long as he or she does not do so to an "excess" is unscriptural, antiscriptural, ridiculous, preposterous, and absurd!

We close this document with the following argument:

MAJOR PREMISE: All things which war against the soul are things from which men are commanded to abstain. Proof, 1 Peter 2:11.

MINOR PREMISE: The drinking of intoxicants is a thing which wars against the soul. Proof, consider Hosea 4:11; Proverbs 20:1.

CONCLUSION: Therefore, the drinking of intoxicants is a thing from which men are commanded to abstain.

And, we note, that "abstain" does not mean to practice it in moderation. All persons are commanded to abstain from fornication (Acts 15:29; 1 Thess. 4:3), and this does not mean to practice it in moderation or with temperance!

*Route 1, Box 44-D Summerdale, AL 36580*

# Limited Atonement?

By Dr. John Hobbs

The third cardinal doctrine in Calvinistic Theology is the doctrine of “Limited Atonement.” It is the “L” in the T-U-L-I-P acrostic. Most Calvinists prefer the term “Particular Atonement” or “Definite Atonement.”

## What Calvinists Believe About Limited Atonement

> *The Canons of Dort, article 8, states, ‘It was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and only those, who were from eternity chosen to salvation.’*
>
> *Henry Fish, a Baptist wrote in 1850, ‘Did the atonement, in its saving design, embrace more then the elect? The elect only; for whatever he designed he will accomplish, and he saves only his people from their sins.’*
>
> *David Steele and Curtis Thomas wrote, ‘But He came into the world to represent and save only those given Him by the Father. Thus Christ’s work was limited in that it was designed to save some and not others.’*
>
> *WJ. Seaton said, ‘Christ died to save a particular number of sinners.’*
>
> *Lorraine Boettner said, ‘The value of the atonement depends upon, and is measured by, the dignity of the person making it; and since Christ suffered as a Divine-human person the value of His suffering was infinite … The atonement, therefore, was infinitely meritorious and might have saved every member of the human race had that been God’s plan.’*

> *Ralph Gore wrote, "Christ died for the elect. The extent of the atonement is identical with the intent of divine election."*
>
> *Paul Enns wrote, 'If God is sovereign (Eph. 1:11) then His plan cannot be frustrated, but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved then God's plan is frustrated.'*
>
> *R. B. Kuiper said, 'God purposed by the atonement to save only the elect and that consequently all the elect, and they alone, will be saved.'*

The question may be put this way: When Christ died on the cross, did he pay for the sins of the entire human race or only for the sins of those who he knew would ultimately be saved? Calvinists would answer the latter group.

> *Wayne Grudem wrote: The term that is usually preferred is particular redemption, since this view holds that Christ died for particular people (specifically, those who would be saved and whom he came to redeem), that he foreknew each one of them individually (cf. Eph. 1:3-5) and had them individually in mind in his atoning work.*

# The Foundational Basis for Limited Atonement

The doctrine of Limited Atonement is based on the concept of double jeopardy (trying a person twice for the same crime). The argument goes like this: If Jesus died for the sins of all men, then the sins of all men are paid for and one has already been judged for those sins. On the Day of Judgment, if God would bring a man into judgment and commit him to hell even though Jesus had already paid for his sins, God would be

putting that person in double jeopardy. God would be unjust – something he is not (Deut. 32:4).

The argument is: Since we do not permit double jeopardy in our own legal system, surely we would not expect God to do something we would not do.

Calvinists argue therefore – Jesus actually died only for the sins of the elect, the chosen, the saved.

However, just because there is an analogy from a human viewpoint, this does not prove that it coincides with the truth of God's word.

Isaiah 55:8-9 states, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Proverbs 14:12 states, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." We are warned: "Lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

We do not formulate doctrine by analogies or examples. They may illustrate doctrine, but they do not prove doctrine. We must determine truth from the Word of God and not human reasoning. There are some great truths of scripture which are beyond our comprehension and we accept because the Bible teaches them (such as, the Trinity, God's love, nature of sin, and such like), and therefore are not proved by reason, but are known by revelation.

# Scriptures Used by Calvinists to Support Limited Atonement

> *Matthew 1:21 states, "For it is he that shall save his people from their sins."*
>
> *Jesus "loved the church and gave himself up for it" (Eph.*

*5:25).*

*Romans 4:25 reads, "Who was delivered up for our trespasses."*

*Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

*Romans 5:10 reveals, "We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son."*

*Romans 8:32 declares, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."*

*Acts 20:28 states, "To feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."*

*In John 10:15 Jesus said, "I lay down my life for the sheep."*

*2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "Him who knew no sin he made to be [a] sin [offering] on our behalf."*

*Galatians 1:4 says, "Who gave himself for our sins."*

*Ephesians 1:7 says, "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."*

*Titus 2:14 states, "Who gave himself for us."*

Calvinists use the above Scriptures as proof texts that Christ died "only" for the elect.

Christ died for his people. That is the main point of these verses! However the Bible does not teach Limited Atonement – that Christ died "only" for the elect, "only" for a limited class.

Calvinists "twist" and "pervert" other plain Scriptures that clearly teach that Christ died for all men. They do so unto their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:15-17). When we come to the Bible, we must take all of it to arrive at total-saving truth.

Psalms 119:160 states, “The sum of all thy word is truth.” Matthew 4:4 says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” It takes all of Scripture for the man of God to be complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We must preach “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Christ died for all men. Christians appreciate the fact that Christ died for them. The verses used by Calvinists emphasize that point. Unbelievers do not appreciate that fact and therefore do nothing about it.

## A True Story Concerning Hebrews 2:9

In 1980, I took second year New Testament Greek through Wheaton College at the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Dallas, Texas. My professor was Dr. John Werner, an outstanding world-recognized Greek scholar. But, he was a Calvinist through and through. One day we were reading the book of Hebrews in class. When it came my time to read, I was to translate Hebrews 2:9. I translated the verse, “But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death *only for the elect.”*

My professor and the class laughed. After the laughter subsided, I added, “Excuse me – that should be – for *every* man.”

Brethren, if the grammar makes sense, anything else is nonsense. To deny that Jesus tasted of death “for every man” is to deny the plain and clear teaching of Scripture! Dr. Werner agreed that the verse should be translated “for every man.” But, he denied that is what it meant. He believed that it meant “every redeemed man” even though that is not what the text says!

We should not base biblical doctrine on “feeling” or “thinking.” Biblical doctrine is based on God’s Word!

If the Holy Spirit wanted to say that Christ died only for the elect, he could have easily done so. But, he did not do so. There is no “specific” passage in the entire Bible that teaches Limited Atonement.

Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, says, “Hebrews 2:9 is best understood to refer to every one of Christ’s people, every one who is redeemed.”

Grudem is reading the Bible with his rose colored glasses on and sees what he wants to see instead of what is really there! The text does not say that Christ tasted of death for every “redeemed” man. Grudem is reading into the text something that is not there. This is something that God’s Word explicitly forbids (Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:8-9; 3:15; 2 John 9-11; Matt. 4:4; Prov. 30:5-6; Deut. 4:2; 12:32).

The words *every man* in Hebrews 2:9 are translated from the Greek word *pantos* (in form it is a genitive masculine or neuter singular word from the adjective *pas, pasa, pan* meaning “all” or “every”).

Bruce says:

> *So far as the form goes, pantos might be masculine (“everyone”) or neuter (“everything”); but since our author’s concern is with Christ’s work for humanity, and not with cosmic implications of His work, it is more probable to be taken as masculine.*

Alford says, “The singular brings out, far more strongly than the plural would, the applicability of Christ’s death to each individual man.” Jesus died for each individual person (which equals all mankind). The singular *pantos* emphasizes his care and love and concern for every human being!

This fact is a strong factor for each individual person to give his life back to him and live a holy God-fearing life (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

This same Greek word, *pantos,* is found in Matthew 13:19 and is translated "when any one." It is obvious in Matthew 13:19 that the Greek word refers only to lost human beings.

It is interesting that the Greek New Testament uses the word *pantos* at least once specifically to refer "only" to condemned human beings. Calvinists say that the word *pantos* in Hebrews 2:9 refers "only" to saved "redeemed" people. If the word *pantos* in Matthew 13:19 refers only to lost people who will spend eternity in hell, does that mean that in Hebrews 2:9 that the same group is being considered? No!

Can the word *pantos* refer to all mankind including those who appreciate Christ's death for them? Of course! Christ "tasted of death for every man." It is important to understand that the meaning of *pantos* will have to be determined by the context. Therefore, we can conclude that in Hebrews 2:9, the Greek word *pantos* refers to all humans period – not just the saved, not just God's special people. Jesus died for all humans – those who are lost and those who are going to heaven. Calvinists deny the plain teaching of God's Word and add to it when they say Jesus tasted of death for every "redeemed" man.

# An Examination of God's Word and Limited Atonement

The Bible is very clear that Jesus died for the sins of "all men" and not just for "the elect."

Consider these passages as to who Jesus died for:

1. John 1:29: "the one that taketh away the sin of the world" – i.e. all mankind

2. John 3:16: “the world” – i.e. all mankind
3. John 4:42: “This is indeed the Saviour of the world” – i.e. all mankind
4. John 12:47: “I came … to save the world” – i.e. all mankind
5. Romans 5:6: “Christ died for the ungodly”
6. Romans 5:8: “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”
7. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: “he died for all”
8. 2 Corinthians 5:19: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself” – i.e. all mankind. Those who believe in Limited Atonement say this refers to “the world of the elect.” Again, they are adding to the Word of God.
9. 1 Timothy 1:15: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”
10. Timothy 2:6: “Who gave himself a ransom for all”
11. 1 Timothy 4:10: “Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe”
12. Titus 2:11: “bringing salvation to all men”
13. Hebrews 2:9: “He should taste of death for every man.”
14. 2 Peter 2:1: “Denying the Master that bought them” – Christ provided redemption for the false prophets but they refused to accept it.
15. 1 John 2:2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” – i.e. all mankind
16. 1 John 4:14 “The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” – i.e. all mankind

# A Study of 1 John 2:2

One passage that must be the focus of our attention is 1 John 2:2. Here John wrote, “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”

Vine defines “propitiation” as “a means whereby sin is covered and remitted.” The text is very clear that sin covering has been provided “for our sins” – that is, Christians’ and “for the whole world,” or all humanity. If there was ever a verse in the Bible that taught the possibility of unlimited salvation – this is it!

Brown says that the word “world” is the “sphere of human beings and of human experience.” The apostle John uses the word “world” several times to refer to all humanity (John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 12:46-47; 1 John 4:14).

It is sad that some people “twist” the scriptures from their true meaning (2 Pet. 3:15-17). The same basis for forgiving one man’s sins is also the same basis for forgiving the sins of all men – the death of Christ.

It is not implied or taught that sins are forgiven unconditionally. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of Universalism, i.e. all men will be saved. The Bible does teach that only those who appropriate the blood of Christ over their sins will be saved (Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 2:10; 7:14).

> *Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, writes, “The preposition ‘for’ [in 1 John 2:2] is ambiguous with respect to the specific sense in which Christ is the propitiation “for” the sins of the world.*
>
> *The Greek word translated “for” in this verse is peri, and means ‘concerning’ or ‘with respect to.” It does not define the way in which Christ is the sacrifice with respect to the sins of the world.*
>
> *It is consistent with the language of the verse to say that John is simply saying that Christ is the sacrifice available to pay for the sins of anyone and everyone in the world.”*

There are several problems with Grudem's twisting of Scripture:

(1) Grudem does not deal with the word *world* in his defense of Calvinism. It is obvious that John uses the word "world" in the verse and in the other verses cited to refer to all humanity. Jesus died for all mankind.

(2) It is true that the word *for* in the phrase *for the whole world* is the Greek word *peri*. I agree that it means "concerning" or "with respect to."

Robertson says that *pen* has a sense similar to *hyper* in the verse. The word *hyper* means "in behalf of." It must be pointed out that the word *for* in the phrases *for our sins* and *not for ours only* in 1 John 2:2 is translated from the Greek word *peri*.

The Holy Spirit inspired John to use the Greek word *peri* three times in 1 John 2:2. This word is sufficient to define the way Christ is the sacrifice "for our sins" but not "for the sins of the whole world."

Grudem says that the preposition *peri* "is ambiguous." He is straining the gnat and swallowing the camel in order to avoid accepting the clear truth. Grudem would say that its third use in the verse is ambiguous but not its first and second uses.

The emphasis in the verse is on Christ's "propitiation" – not the preposition "for."

John says Christ's propitiation is "for our sins" and "not for ours only" but also "for the sins of the whole world."

# A Study of 1 Timothy 4:10

Paul wrote, "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe."

This verse is important to the discussion. Here the apostle clearly states the salvation of all men. He does not teach Universalism. But, he does teach that salvation has been provided for all men, i.e. all humanity. However, that salvation is appropriated and appreciated by those who believe. All men are potentially saved by Christ's death, but only those who appropriate the blood of Christ over their sins will be saved.

Grudem says:

> *He [Jesus] is referring to God the Father, not to Christ, and probably uses the word 'Savior' in the sense of 'one who preserves people's lives and rescues them from danger' rather then the sense of 'one who forgives their sins,' for surely Paul does not mean that every single person will be saved.*

Grudem misses it again.

(1) No, Paul is not teaching that every single person will be saved. No New Testament writer ever taught that.

(2) There is no problem with taking the word *Savior* as referring to God the Father. He is the Savior of all men in that He sent Jesus to die for all men (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). The Father and the Son are one in purpose, aim, plan, and design (John 10:30).

(3) For Grudem to say that the word *Savior* does not refer to "sins" shows his theological bias. In Matthew 1:21, the child is to be called Jesus. Why? Because he will save his people from their "sins." The word "Jesus" means "Savior." Grudem does not want 1 Timothy 4:10 to refer to "sins," so he denies it.

(4) God desires "all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). Salvation for "all men" has been

provided (1 Tim. 4:10). However, this salvation is “specially” for those who “believe.” This word does not imply that all will be saved. The Greek word *malista* translated “specially” is also translated “particularly” or “especially” in 1 Timothy 5:17 and “above all” or “especially” in 2 Timothy 4:13. Paul is saying that God is potentially the Savior of all men. For the individuals who “will” to come to the Lord, these individuals “will in no wise be cast out” (John 5:40; 6:37).

J.W. Roberts wrote, “He is the savior (potentially) of all men, but especially (or actually) of believers.”

Dr. J. C. Davis states, “God is the potential Savior of all men (John 3:16; Rom. 10:13; 2 Pet. 3:9). God is the actual Savior of believers” (Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:8; Rev. 2:10).

J. N. D. Kelly wrote, “Paul is no doubt giving expression to his conviction that the certainty of salvation belongs in an especial degree to those who have accepted Christ.” True!

1 Timothy 4:10 is like Galatians 6:10. Christians are to “work that which is good toward all men and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.” We have an obligation to do “good toward all men” (even the ones who have not named the name of Christ). But, we have a special obligation to help those who are Christians. Christ died for all men but especially for those who believe.

# An Invitation Is Given to All Men

In Matthew 11:25, Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The church, the bride as it is called, and the Holy Spirit perpetuate that invitation as shown by John in Revelation 22:17:

> *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*

The invitation is given to all men. Why offer salvation to all if that is not possible? The text says “whosoever” will.

## God Desires All Men to Be Saved

In (2 Peter 3:9) we read:

> *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

God wants “all” to come to repentance! Boettner, a Calvinist, denies that it is God’s plan for all to be saved. Seaton, a Calvinist, asks, “The over-riding question must always be the Divine intention; did God intend to save all men, or did He not?”

The fact that God desires that “all” should come to repentance implies that God has provided provisions for “all.” Christ died for all men. This verse teaches that if a man is lost, it is against God’s will because he wants “all” to come to repentance and be saved.

In 1 Timothy 2:4, Paul wrote, “Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” Here again God’s Word is clear. God desires that all men be saved.

In (Ezekiel 33:11) we read:

> *As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

God desires that the wicked turn from his evil ways and live. God does not want or wish that any person be lost.

Paul Enns, a Calvinist, wrote, “If God is sovereign then His

plan cannot be frustrated, but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved, then God's plan is frustrated."

God is sovereign, but his plan involves the free will of man. His plan is that those who by their free will elect to believe and become obedient will be saved.

God is "frustrated" or "grieved" when men do not respond to his saving grace (Gen. 6:5-6; Mark 3:5; Luke 19:41; Eph. 4:30).

God's desire and will is frustrated when men are lost. God wants "all" to come to repentance and "all men" to be saved. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11). "God is not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9).

But, some will perish – not because Jesus did not die for them. He died for each individual person to show his intense love. If an individual is lost, it is because he has rejected God's intense love. God does not desire it that way. But, he respects the right of a person to make his own decision.

# Pardon for Sins Can Be Rejected

It is possible for pardon and salvation to be offered and rejected. In 1829 two men, Wilson and Porter, were apprehended in the state of Pennsylvania for robbing the United States mail. They were indicted, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging. Three weeks before the scheduled execution, President Andrew Jackson pardoned one of the men, George Wilson. This was followed by a strange decision. George Wilson refused the pardon! He was hung because he rejected the pardon.

Today, God has provided eternal salvation and pardon for all men. He has accomplished this by sending his one-of-a-kind Son to die for the sins of each and every individual person. However, this salvation can be refused.

If one chooses not to appropriate the blood of Christ over his

sins initially and continually, he is refusing and rejecting the salvation which has been provided for him by God Almighty. While we can recognize the foolishness of such a decision, we must be aware of the fact that the majority of mankind will refuse their pardon (Matt. 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-24). How sad!

# Why Did God Create Man?

A lady asked me, "Why did God create man if he knew so many would be lost?"

This is a thought-provoking question. I answer this with two thoughts:

(1) Whatever God does is right and just. We may not understand what he does but that is because we are human and finite while he is divine and infinite (Isa. 55:8-9). Deuteronomy 32:4 states, "For all his ways are justice: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he." God himself asked Job, "Wilt thou even annul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified?" Job attacked and condemned the present righteousness of God. Job sinned by doing this. Job later repented Job 40:35; 42:1-6).

(2) I think the answer to this tough question is that God respects our free moral agency. If a man is lost, it will be his fault – not God's! God has done everything possible for the salvation of each person. God will not overtake one's will and force him to obey. Life is what we make it! We can avail ourselves of God's love or we can spurn it and reject it. The choice is ours (Deut. 30:11-15; Joshua 24:15; Acts 2:37, 40).

Seaton, a Calvinist, said, "If it was God's intention to save the entire world, then the atonement of Christ has been a great failure, for vast numbers of mankind have not been saved."

Seaton misses it. Christ's death was not a failure. The

failure is man's free moral will. Man by his own free will chooses not to obey. Christ is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9; cf. John 3:36; Rom. 6:17-18; 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17).

On the Day of Judgment if a person is cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity, it will be his own failure – not God's! The failure lies with man not with God.

Calvinists say they focus on God's sovereignty while we focus on man's free will. I say it is not an either/or situation; it is a both/and situation. Both of the these concepts are respected in the scriptures. We must accept both.

# Conclusion

To deny the Bible teaching that Christ died for all is to make God a respecter of persons – unjust and unmerciful. The doctrine of limited atonement is false. All men are potentially saved. If a person refuses pardon, death is not the fault of the one who offered mercy, but of the one who refused to accept it.

> *(Editor's Note: The word atonement means to cover or conceal. It is an Old Testament word and is not found in the New Testament. The sins of people before the cross could be atoned, but after the cross the sins of the obedient believer were forgiven. There is a dramatic difference. Under Moses there was a remembrance made of atoned sins year by year [Heb. 10:3 – the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins]. The blood of animals could cause God to overlook sins while remembering them year by year, but could not remove the sins. This was atonement. The blood of the Lamb of God is able not to merely cover or bypass sins, but to remove every transgression and disobedience. To receive the forgiveness available in the blood of the cross, one must obey [Heb. 5:7-8].)*

# If Any Man Speak

*By J. Shannon (Shan) Jackson*
Vol. 107, No. 02

One of life's grandest blessings is our ability to discuss with others. Speech, when correctly used, is of essential benefit. Used incorrectly, talk can do much harm. The difference between the two is often in the speaker's attitude and motive. The tongue is a "little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" (James 3:5). Jesus asked the Pharisees, "How can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (Matt. 12:34). Christians must consider attitude in their speech and guard their words.

We all should be impressed with the awesome power of the tongue. Improperly used, James says, the tongue can defile the whole body (James 3:6). Properly used speech can do much good. "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). Consider the proper use of language.

In teaching truth, we must "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Here is the caveat. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Jesus tells his disciples to "go and teach all nations" but their teaching is to be the things he "commanded them" (Matthew 28:19).

In 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul tells Timothy to "preach the word." He warns, "for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

A proper use for human speech is "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). There is also occasion for sealed lips and answering not a word (See John 19:9). In worship of God, acceptable worship must be "in spirit and in truth" – correct in attitude and correct in action. The Bible names five acts of worship – singing, praying, teaching, communion, and giving. Singing, praying, and teaching require speech. "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). Bringing our feelings into sweet harmony with the words of a song, a public prayer, or the presentation of God's word shows our love for a loving God.

In confession of Jesus, there are also five steps that bring salvation. The New Testament tells us to hear God's truth, believe it, repent of our unholy life, confess Jesus as Lord, and submit to water baptism. It is the acceptance and obedience of these steps that puts us "in Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27).

Confession of Jesus as the resurrected son of God is to be verbal. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).

In defense of truth: Many problems facing the church today stem from our unwillingness to defend God's truth. A Christian is to be ready always to teach the truth and protect it. We fear and studiously avoid controversy to the disgrace of the gospel and our own shame. Argument for the sake of argument is infamy, but argument in defense of truth is honorable and necessary. We forget Jesus was a brilliant debater.

Paul said that “in the defense and confirmation of the gospel” we are “partakers of grace” (Phil. 1:7). Our knowledge enables us to approve the things that are excellent (and therefore disapprove things that are contrary to truth) that we may be “void of offence unto the day of Christ” (Phil. 1:10). We must be “bold to speak the word of God without fear… set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:14, 16).

“Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4). Yes, our speech is very serious business. Jesus said, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:37). Watch your mouth and pay attention to your words. “For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven…a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Eccl. 3:1, 7). What you say can condemn you! What you ought to say, but fail to speak, also can condemn you! Happy is silence in the face of slander and injustice.