



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Dr Beeke's Bible venture begins to unravel

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy," Proverbs 28:13.

There is something worse than sinning. It is a denying of our sin and a seeking to cover it.

There is something worse than dishonesty. It is the covering-up of a lie and seeking to pass it off as a poorly-stated truth.

Both of these things the producers of the "Reformation Heritage Study Bible" (RHSB) and the editor, Dr Joel Beeke, in particular are guilty of.

Doubtless, at least some of the contributors to the RHSB are not involved in the subterfuge which we allege. However, as the deceit is uncovered they are duty bound to declare against it or else must be deemed party to it.

Among the first matters that scrutinisers of the RHSB notes discovered were the very wrong comments on Matthew 16:18 and Romans 6:1-4.

Here are the RHSB notes on those two passages.

Matthew 16:18.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The RHSB notes on this verse read:

Peter. Jesus makes a play on Peter's name, which literally means "rock." The rock that Jesus builds His Church upon is most naturally understood as Peter, together with the other apostles in their Spirit-given testimony of Him (Eph. 2:20; Rev 21:14).

Now we are told some six months after the publication went on sale that: ". . . we regret that the wording in the note on Matthew 16:18 was not as clear as it should have been. Hence we have changed this to read as follows: "Peter means 'a stone'; rock is a different word referring to bedrock (7:24-25). Christ, reflecting on Peter's name, affirmed that the confession of Him by Peter and the other apostles is the bedrock on which He builds His church (Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:14). Nothing here implies that Peter is the first in any apostolic or papal succession. True apostolic succession lies in the confession of the gospel through the ages." We appreciate your alerting us to these things." (Joel Beeke **blog post**)

Will the reader please study these two statements and note that the second is not a clarifying amendment of the first but rather the second statement is a complete contradiction of the first.

Dr Beeke calls the amended comment a clarification when it is in fact is a setting forth of a doctrine totally at odds with the comments printed in the RHSB!

Now to say that the first statement was "not as clear as it should have been" and then to replace it with a statement which supposedly elucidates the wording but which in fact completely contradicts the first comments is not honest. Rather, it is a seeking to cover-up the heresy that the first comments taught!

For such chicanery to be associated with the publishing of a copy of the Word of God is shameful to the utmost!

Why was there not an honest acknowledging that there had been a grievous error of judgment in appointing a person with such notions to comment on Matthew's Gospel?



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

That would have been the Christian and Biblical way of handling that matter and would have been met with understanding and sympathy by God's people everywhere.

But when such subterfuge is resorted to then we must suspect the motives of those involved in this venture.

Romans 6:1-4.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The RHSB notes at the foot of the page about these verses contain these words:

Justification is the change of man's moral nature; every justified man is a changed man (Titus 3:4-7).

As it stands, this comment is promoting the erroneous Roman Catholic doctrine of 'Justification'.

Six months after the publishing of the RHSB with this note we are told by Dr Beeke:

" the note for Romans 6:1-4 should read, "Justification is not the change of man's moral nature, but every justified man is a changed man (Titus 3:4-7)." An editor in the outside firm that did the final proofing for grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakenly deleted the word not! She has written to us wishing to express her "deepest apologies for any confusion that this error has caused." Happily, in the introduction to Romans as well as in several other places in the notes to Romans and throughout the Bible, we made abundantly clear that we strongly affirm justification by faith alone."

'Nots' and 'Buts'

The insertion of the word 'but' is in addition to the reinsertion of the 'not' which was supposedly removed by the editor from the outside firm. Thus the simple replacing of a 'not' does not correct the alleged mistake by the editor.

Furthermore for Dr Beeke to say: *"Happily, in the introduction to Romans as well as in several other places in the notes to Romans and throughout the Bible, we made abundantly clear that we strongly affirm justification by faith alone"* is a red herring since the controversy is not about how justification is appropriated by the sinner, which is by faith, but that which followed in the sinner's experience after he is justified. In their present form the RHSB comments teach that justification results in a moral change which is not true.

Therefore for Dr Beeke to state that in the RHSB they "strongly affirm justification by faith alone" is a ploy to distract from the error being challenged.

Rev Brian McClung in **his blog** makes some important observations on this "error"!

"In raising this serious mistake/error/false teaching I am told that the publishers are aware of it and have acknowledged its seriousness. I have also been told that it is a mere typographical error and that the word 'not' simply needs to be inserted into the statement and all will be well. I have also been told that the sentence needs rewording. Which is it to be I wonder?"

The simple insertion of the word 'not' would leave us with a very strange sentence construction and could well become a statement of the obvious. It's hard to know just where the word 'not' is to be inserted for the sentence to make any sense and have any relevance.

In the light of this most serious mistake/error/false teaching, should not the publishers immediately and publicly draw people's attention to this, at best, unfortunate inclusion? This is not a typographical error that has no unintended consequence. As the sentence stands, in the footnote, it is presently



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

teaching the Roman Catholic view of Justification. This then is a most serious and deeply unfortunate doctrinal error to be found in the Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible!

Editing

You are left to wonder how a statement like this, with its theological and doctrinal implications, ever got through the editing process! It will be interesting to discover how extensive the correction will be to this footnote in future editions. It is absolutely astonishing that a supposed 'typographical error' has been turned into a statement of Romish doctrine! What would the 'probability' of this ever happening be?

I also wonder, is the reluctance to highlight this serious error, down to an unwillingness to impact sales of the hard copies already printed of this Study Bible? Would existing copies need to be pulped? Would people be entitled to a refund?

Surely for the publishers to knowingly let serious error, of this nature, continue to be circulated in this Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible without any immediate, public clarification or correction is not honourable conduct!!!"

Mr McClung raises important questions which I believe Dr Beeke's blog comments do not address.

If the mistake was simply the inadvertent removing of a 'not' from the original comment then we are left with the purported original comment which said: Justification is not the change of man's moral nature; every justified man is a changed man (Titus 3:4-7). The first phrase certainly appears to contradict the second phrase. To be as charitable as possible, such a statement from an experienced theological commentator, which we presume the writer of the comments on Romans was, is hard to credit!

However, even were we to accept Dr Beeke's explanation, why were some 20,000 copies of the RHSB still sold without any public clarification until now of the promoting of one of the heinous doctrines of Rome?

That has to be explained, for the promoting of such error and the failure to warn the flock of God about this heretical statement, irrespective of its origins, is a grave sin indeed.

Mr McClung's question stands: "I also wonder, is the reluctance to highlight this serious error, down to an unwillingness to impact sales of the hard copies already printed of this Study Bible? Would existing copies need to be pulped? Would people be entitled to a refund?"

Such considerations, if they did indeed influence the publishers of the RHSB, bring shame upon them.

A further consideration of Dr Beeke's blog, which he entitled: "**Update on the Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible**", reveals some important facts.

1. The first matter he deals with is the commercial success of the venture.

His first words were: "The first press run of 20,000 copies of the Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible has sold remarkably well. Our present stock is nearing depletion after only six months."

We would stress that there are many other vital statements which are currently being challenged within the RHSB as well as the two we have mentioned, but you would have thought that Dr Beeke would have been anxious to rectify the errors in the RHSB first before he came to the success he claims for this flawed publication!

2. There is absolutely no mention of a refund for those who bought this imperfect publication in good faith. I do not think this is right or God-honouring.

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men," Romans 12:17.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just,



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things," Philippians 4:8.

"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation," 1 Peter 2:12.

3. I cannot but think that an honest God-fearing man would be ashamed and embarrassed by his promoting and selling a product with the flaws that have been highlighted (and there are more to follow) in the RHSB of which Dr Beeke is the editor. But there appears no such embarrassment and certainly no evidence of shame in Dr Beeke's blog.

Those good men who have lent their name to this production by contributing notes on some of the books of the Bible must surely ask themselves the question:

"CAN I CONTINUE TO REMAIN SILENT AND THUS GIVE MY CONSENT TO THE ONGOING COVER-UP?"

This business is not going to go away, but time is only going to expose more compromise and deceit as this venture continues to unravel!

(We commend to all our readers Rev Brian McClung's blog, ***The sound of an alarm***)

Ivan Foster.

11th April 2015.