

## EFFECT OF DRINKING AT A CORRUPT SPRING *continued*

*“Dear Groomsport family,  
I hope that you are all doing well. I have been thinking about you often, and my congregation in Baltimore sends greetings. It has been a wonderfully busy Fall. On October 14th, my fiancée, Lauren, and I were married at a beautiful ceremony on the Chesapeake Bay. We were delighted to have so many family, friends, and much of our congregation present with us. I’ll be sure to send photos along when I get them in the Spring. Our prayers remain with you all. We hope that you have a lovely Christmas!  
Best, Jennifer.”*

For Groomsport Presbyterian Church to support the position of its American friends in Princeton Theological Seminary – endorsement of same-sex marriage, even in the ministerial office of the church – is unscriptural and unconscionable. It is further sad evidence that the judgment pronounced in Jeremiah 23:15 is falling on both sides of the Atlantic: *“Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; ‘Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land’.”*



### MEETINGS TODAY

- Sunday School – 10.15am
- Morning Worship – 11.30am: *14th Message in the Galatians Series: “Getting Away From The Gospel.”*
- Evening Service – 7.00pm: *“Prayers from the Pit.”*

### INSPIRATION IN A SENTENCE

*“The Gospel does not say, ‘There is a Saviour, if you wish to be saved’; but, ‘Sir, you have no right to go to hell – you can’t go there without trampling on the Son of God’.”*

[ Rabbi Duncan ]



### THE EFFECT OF DRINKING AT A CORRUPT SPRING

When Rev. Dr. D. Roger Purce began to drink at the “troubled fountain” and “corrupt spring” that is Princeton Theological Seminary, it was inevitable that he would channel its poisoned waters into his own congregation.

Minister of Groomsport Presbyterian Church, Northern Ireland, from 1992-2006 and now serving as its Minister Emeritus, Dr. Purce received his Doctor of Ministry degree from Princeton Theology Seminary. This connection resulted in him mentoring a steady stream of interns from Princeton. Jennifer Barchi was one such intern, spending 2010/11 in Groomsport Presbyterian Church. She has since become the minister of Dickey Memorial PCUSA in Baltimore.

In the Christmas 2017 edition of the Groomsport church’s magazine ‘Eagle Wing’ a letter is published from this former intern along with a photo of two women. Jennifer writes:



## GRIEF OVER GETTING AWAY FROM THE GOSPEL

Text: **Galatians 5:1-12.**

Using one of the classic methods to win an argument, Paul, in **Galatians 4:22–5:1**, takes a Scripture that his enemies loved (**Genesis 16**), and then ‘turns the tables’ on them by showing how this same Scripture highlights their error. Hagar’s son (Ishael) represents human effort trying to gain God’s favour; Sarah’s son (Isaac) underlines belief in God’s promise ... which was a mirror image of the conflict that was raging in Galatia. Paul concludes his argument by sounding a battle cry (**5:1**), urging the believers not to wrap themselves in the chains of bondage again, but rather cling to their liberty in Christ. The apostle is so anxious that those in the Galatian churches should not abandon loyalty to, and liberty through, the Gospel that he spells out the consequences of Getting Away from the Gospel:

### [1] CHRIST IS DISCARDED; 5:2-4.

#### (a) THE DIVISION.

Due to the influence of the Judaisers in Galatia, church members were lining up on two sides: the party of the circumcision and the party of Christ. However Paul stresses how, if our works are added to Christ’s work, Christ and His grace are neutralised; **5:2**. “A Christ supplemented is a Christ supplanted” (Hendriksen). Cf. Rome has no answer to Paul’s polemic in this Book!

#### (b) THE DEBT.

If anyone chooses to follow the teaching of the Judaisers on the topic of circumcision, he must travel the full distance and keep the law in its entirety; **5:3** – a point that is repeated from **3:10**.

#### (c) THE DESPERATION.

The path advocated by the false teachers in Galatia is a completely ruinous one as it leads away from Christ and grace; **5:4**. This fact is emphasised by the strength of the terms Paul uses: (i) “of no effect” and (ii) “fallen from grace”: as far as their teaching was concerned, they were steering away from a Gospel path to a works-based religion.

### [2] TRUTH IS DISOBEYED; 5:5-12.

Gospel truth is opposed in every age. Cf. the indictment of Baptist pastor Benjamin Keach in 1664 on account of writing, ‘The Child’s Instructor.’ Keach responded: “I hope I shall never renounce the truths which I have written in that book.”

Paul’s arguments are by no means all defensive or negative; in this section he speaks up the positive nature of the Christian’s position.

The Christian has:

(a) **ETERNAL PROSPECTS; 5:5**: we have a confident hope now; one day soon it will be seen in full bloom.

“Every morning you rise put on again the best robe” (Whyte).

(b) **EFFECTUAL PURPOSES; 5:5-6**: the Holy Spirit is the Agent who applies the benefits of redemption to God’s child. Paul is ‘beating the drum’ in **5:6** (he does so again in **6:15** and **1 Corinthians 7:19**): the sinner is not justified by any act he performs himself, but by the free mercy of God in Christ.

(c) **EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCES; 5:6**: This key truth alone is life-changing, and is faith with fruit as it is evidenced by love. Conscious that the Galatians had once delighted in the preaching of this truth, Paul laments the (d) **ENFEEBLING POTHOLES; 5:7**, into which they had stumbled.

(e) **ENCOURAGING PORTENTS; 5:10**:

In these the apostle can detect light at the end of the tunnel: while he had feared for them (**4:11**) and was perplexed by them (**4:20**), he trusts, not in them, but counts on Christ to come to their assistance – and deliver them from the Judaising heresies.

### [3] FALSEHOOD IS DEVASTATING; 5:11-12.

The punishment that will fall on the false teachers is declared (**5:10**) and then detailed (**5:11-12**).

Wrath would fall on account of their (a) **DECEPTION**.

Initially they had lied, claiming that Paul endorsed their views re circumcision. “How can this be if Jews are persecuting me?!” Paul’s expressed desire for their (b) **DESTRUCTION** involves a play on words (**5:12**) – mockingly, he suggests that those who are so interested in mutilation should go for full castration. This final salvo reminds us how the curse of heaven rests on every false doctrine.