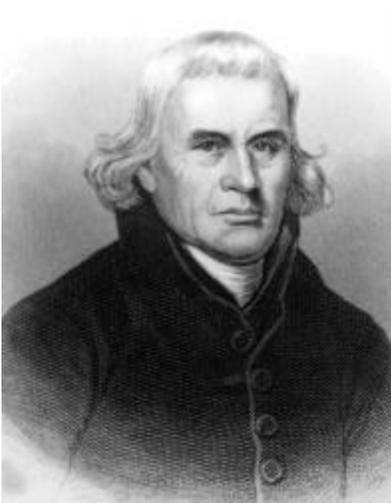


## Bishop Asbury on Faith and Works

*Francis Asbury (1745-1816), pioneer bishop and shaper of American Methodism, is estimated to have logged some 250,000 miles on horseback, as he traveled and preached around the country. In this excerpt from his journal, he discusses the oft-misunderstood relationship between the classic Protestant emphasis on salvation as gift of God's grace, and the necessity of human moral responsibility.*



St. Paul says in one place, "By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." In another place, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." But some, who see the danger of seeking to be justified by the deeds of the law, turn all their attention to those passages of Scripture which ascribe our salvation to the grace of God; and to avoid the rock which they discover on their right hand, they strike against that which is equally dangerous on the left, by exclaiming against all conditions and doings on the part of man; and so make void the law through faith... What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. And he, having

joined salvation by grace with repentance, prayer, faith, self-denial, love and obedience, whoever putteth them asunder will do it at his peril.

But it is likewise true that others who see the danger of this, in order... to steer clear of it, go about to establish their own righteousness; and although they profess to ascribe the merit of their salvation to Jesus Christ, yet think they cannot fail of eternal life, because they have wrought many good deeds of piety towards God, and of justice and mercy toward man... Happy the man who so studies the Holy Scriptures, his own heart, and the plan of salvation, and daily prays with such earnest sincerity to Almighty God, as to see that neither faith without works, nor works without faith which justifies the ungodly, will suffice in the awful day of universal retribution!