

**General Topics :: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - Paul Washer**

**"Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - Paul Washer - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/12/31 20:35**

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/myvideo/photos/210.jpg>]

Saints,

I feel this is a very important statement by brother Paul. We need to in our youth especially be about Christ and sharing Him with others instead of so much emphasis on theology and positional arguing. We must preach the message of the gospel where God can save a soul from death. If we believe that man has absolutely no part in that process or that man has a "part" that is not as much the issue as that God is the initiator of salvation and the born-again experience.

**"Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - Paul Washer**

<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/myvideo/photo.php?lid=210>

**Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - Paul Washer - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/12/31 20:53**

Amen.

\*\* Edit - Added additional statements \*\*

We should ask ourselves if our primary concern is to see that people are soundly saved and truly converted or simply converted to our sound theology.

**Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - Paul Washer, on: 2008/12/31 23:08**

Amen...lets check the ego's at the door.

**Re: - posted by Abe\_Juliot (), on: 2009/1/1 0:39**

Quote:  
 -----If we believe that man has absolutely no part in that process or that man has a "part" that is not as much the issue as that God is the initiator of salvation and the born-again experience.  
 -----

I agree that we should endeavor to find unity in the truth of the gospel.

I agree with what Spurgeon said concerning God's gospel:

I do not believe we can preach the gospel if we do not preach justification by faith without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing unchangeable eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross. (Charles Spurgeon, The New Park Street Pulpit, Vol. 1, 1856).

(<http://www.gracegems.org/13/gospel.htm>) Source

Edit addition end (Mon Jan 5, 2009)

I question whether we have preached the whole counsel of God, unless predestination with all its solemnity and sureness be continually declared. (Charles Spurgeon, Sermons, Vol. 6, p. 26).

What the Arminian wants to do is to arouse man's activity: what we want to do is to kill it once for all - to show him that he is lost and ruined, and that his activities are not now at all equal to the work of conversion; that he must look upward. They seek to make the man stand up: we seek to bring him down, and make him feel that there he lies in the hand of God, and that his business is to submit himself to God, and cry aloud, 'Lord, save, or we perish.' We hold that man is never so near grace as when he begins to feel he can do nothing at all. When he says, 'I can pray, I can believe, I can do this, and I can do the other,' marks of self-sufficiency and arrogance are on his brow. -C. H. Spurgeon

I also agree with the comments of Sermonindex concerning the following sermons.

(<http://media.sermonindex.net/0/SID0656.mp3>) 6 Things We Face in Preaching the Gospel by Rolfe Barnard

Description: Rolfe Barnard shares on the sad state of modern day Christianity. Many believe in a 20th century concept of God that cannot defend his church or make the gospel effect in our day. We need to believe in a gospel that can convert and save souls for eternity. He shares 6 things that we face in our modern day when preaching the old gospel.

"A powerful exhortation on many aspects of the gospel that we have neglected and are missing in our modern day preaching. Oh for a gospel that glories God abases man and is worth everything. Weeping shall endure for a night but joy comes in the morning. Blessed are those that mourn (weep) for they shall be comforted." -Sermonindex

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid847&commentViewItemComments>) Source

(<http://media.sermonindex.net/0/SID0668.mp3>) Recovery of the Gospel by Rolfe Barnard

Description: One of the most important needs of the day is the recovery of the true glorious gospel of the mighty God our Lord Jesus Christ. If sin is as deadly as the bible says it is and the devil as real as the bible says he is then to understand the true gospel of grace is the utmost need of our day. We are great sinners, sinning against a great God, that has offered us a great salvation.

"This recording by Rolfe Barnard is a crying, urgent, vital message for something "real" and the need for the true gospel to be preached and believed again. This is not ordinary message but a prophetic calling out to the true body of Christ. May a urgency and unsettling be put your spirit when you hear this important sermon from the past. If it was urgent in his days how much more in our days. The gospel has been furthered lost in our day. May God send a reviving of the true gospel again." - Sermonindex

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid859&commentViewItemComments>) Source

I have seen first hand on the mission field what a denial of these truths can bring forth. I have seen the devastation and despair of ignorance to these biblical truths. I don't think we should ignore biblical truths that the gospel of the glory of God hinges on. Nor should we brush them under the rug.

George Whitefield perhaps shed many tears over John Wesley's denial of these truths when he wrote an open letter to him.

(<http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/wesley.htm>) Read Here

I encourage us to promote Jesus Christ and not the name Calvinism. For those who are studying the doctrines of grace, I encourage you to spend much time in communion with God in the Word. As arguments about these truths may arise, I plead with you to not make the same mistakes that I have in the past. Seek to exhort the brethren to a deeper communion with God as you share the Word. There is a danger of being full of head knowledge and having no humility in your heart as you exhort others. There is a danger of not applying the Word by prayer and close communion with God. Seek to encourage the brethren and be patient with those who disagree.

Beloved, let us love one another. -Abraham

EDIT: punctuation and sentence structure

**Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - Paul Washer - posted by Jimotheus, on: 2009/1/1 2:40**

Greetings:

I respectfully disagree in one sense. One can justly say that "Islam is not the issue", or, "Satanism is not the issue", or, "Child sacrifice is not the issue", just as much as, "Calvinism is not the issue." I believe that we as Christians should reach out to the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are commanded by our Lord to go out into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Yes, and Amen. But we are also called to earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. This means that "Calvinism" (as well as any other teaching contrary to sound doctrine) must, and should be of great concern for those who love the truth. Forgive me if I am wrong but if my information is correct, Mr. Washer is a "Calvinist." If this is so, maybe Mr. Washer wants to take the focus off of the theology of "Calvin" so as to protect it from biblical scrutiny. If "Calvinism" should not be of any concern then maybe nothing taught as "sound" doctrine should be of any concern. I believe that "Calvinism" (as well as all the other "ism's") in the Church-world should be examined in light of the Holy Scriptures. With all due respect to Mr. Washer, and any other "Calvinist" I do not believe that John Calvin nor his "Calvinism" is the faith that was once delivered to the saints. I believe John Calvin was a little protestant "pope" and a murderer and "Calvinism" to be warmed-over Augustinian drivel.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2009/1/1 2:46**

Quote:

-----6 Things We Face in Preaching the Gospel by Rolfe Barnard

Description: Rolfe Barnard shares on the sad state of modern day Christianity. Many believe in a 20th century concept of God that cannot defend his church or make the gospel effect in our day. We need to believe in a gospel that can convert and save souls for eternity. He shares 6 things that we face in our modern day when preaching the old gospel.

"A powerful exhortation on many aspects of the gospel that we have neglected and are missing in our modern day preaching. Oh for a gospel that glorifies God abases man and is worth everything. Weeping shall endure for a night but joy comes in the morning. Blessed are those that mourn (weep) for they shall be comforted." -Sermonindex

Source

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Description: One of the most important needs of the day is the recovery of the true glorious gospel of the mighty God our Lord Jesus Christ. If sin is as deadly as the bible says it is and the devil as real as the bible says he is then to understand the true gospel of grace is the utmost need of our day. We are great sinners, sinning against a great God, that has offered us a great salvation.

"This recording by Rolfe Barnard is a crying, urgent, vital message for something "real" and the need for the true gospel to be preached and believed again. This is not ordinary message but a prophetic calling out to the true body of Christ. May a urgency and unsettling be put your spirit when you hear this important sermon from the past. If it was urgent in his days how much more in our days. The gospel has been furthered lost in our day. May God send a reviving of the true gospel again." - Sermonindex

Source

My quotes and commendations of these messages is not to promote Calvinism and its theology but to promote what the Spirit of God is burdening through that man towards Bible Truth. I am not advocating teachings of the Sovereignty of God that nullify men's responsibility.

God is ashamed of people who argue and banter about His scriptures when they do not come to Christ in His fulness and have unity amongst brethren. The reformation only brought back "some" truths to the Church that were lost. We need a much more fuller revelation of the truth of Church.

**Re: - posted by Abe\_Juliot (), on: 2009/1/1 22:12**

I encourage everyone to listen to these 2 messages by Rolfe Barnard. Rolfe Barnard like Spurgeon and Whitefield had a God-centered burden for souls. These men Preached man's responsibility and God's Sovereignty. Men of God like John Piper and Paul Washer do the same.

Quote:

-----I am not advocating teachings of the Sovereignty of God that nullify men's responsibility.

-----

Amen. Not all Calvinistic preachers neglect to preach man's responsibility. It doesn't appear that Paul Washer is addressing this issue in the Video.

I agree that we should teach man's responsibility and God's Sovereignty. Spurgeon, Whitefield, and Barnard preached both these truths. Biblical God-centered preaching never departs from these truths. Sadly there are some men who love to speak about man's inability... But, they do not have a burden to plead with sinners to come to Christ. We should plead with sinners to flee from sin and cherish Christ. The eternity of Heaven and Hell should bring soberness and tears in our preaching.

Jonathan Edwards said this, "We are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But, God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz. our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and wholly active.

In the Scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart. God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts ... These things are agreeable to the text, "God worketh in you both to will and to do." (Edwards, Efficacious Grace, 557.)

Quote:  
-----God is ashamed of people who argue and banter about His scriptures when they do not come to Christ in His fulness and have unity amongst brethren.  
-----

Many of God's children have been guilty of stumbling in this sin. I myself have and it grieves me. I'm not sure what you mean by "fulness"? If you mean regeneration and bringing forth the fruit of repentance... It is very possible to be in this fullness and stumble into sin and I would agree that God is ashamed of those who have not entered this rest. God is ashamed of children of the devil who argue about scripture.

However, if you mean a born again believer who has not had the Second Crisis Baptism of Fire that some say we need in order to be part of the bride...

I would not say that God is ashamed of them for not being as holy as they could be. I don't know if you are saying that. It doesn't really appear that you are. I know some brethren that do teach this and you know them also.

I want to use this opportunity to speak to those who believe that God is ashamed of some of His children. There are some that believe and teach this. So, I am at least correcting them. (For the purpose of preaching the gospel and edifying the body of Christ)

Every child of God has the Grace of repentance working in them (Jer 32:40, 1Jn 5:18)... though they may fall many times (Psa 37:24, Pro 24:16), God is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb 2:11), and God is not ashamed to be called their God (Heb 11:16) and the children of God are not ashamed of Christ and His words (Mk 8:38) for they do the will of their Father which is in heaven (Mk 12:48-50). Though at times She sees herself as black (2Sa 12:13, Lk 5:8), Christ cleanses her (Eph 5:25-26), loves her (Jer 31:3), and says She is all fair (Son 1:5,15). Yea, let us rejoice that Christ says to His bride, "There is no spot in thee." (Son 4:7) For Christ is our everlasting righteousness. (Dan 9:24, 1Co 1:30, 2Co 5:21)

As children of God, when we fall into a sin, God is ashamed of our sin and we should be ashamed of it also. Amen.

God bless you dear brother!  
-Abraham

**Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - Paul Washer - posted by Abe\_Juliot (), on: 2009/1/3 0:04**

It is not my desire to write long responses. But, I am persuaded that this needs to be said.

Quote:  
-----The reformation only brought back "some" truths to the Church that were lost. We need a much more fuller revelation of the truth of Church.  
-----

Amen. We need a fuller a revelation of Jesus Christ and not just a specific list of doctrines. But, that doesn't mean that we should push aside vital truths of the gospel which offend people. I agree with Paul Washer that we should keep fellows hip with our Arminian and Wesleyan brothers. But, I don't think that we should not gently correct a brother who is in error. I don't think Paul Washer is discouraging that either. Let us never forget that the Word of God is the means that God use s to bring a fuller revelation of Himself. The word of God is full of doctrine and if we are going to preach Christ through Hi s Word, we can't help but preach doctrine.

Paul Washer calls himself a 5 point Spurgeonist. I admire that Paul Washer is linked close with Spurgeon's preaching. I don't know specifically what Washer means by 5 points. I don't want to assume anything. But, if we are going to follow S purgeon's example... The Historic Calvinistic view of God and Man was an definitely an issue that needed to be address ed.

(<http://abrahamjuliot.blogspot.com/2008/07/charles-spurgeon-quotes-on-calvinism.html>) Charles Spurgeon's quotes on Calvinism

There are many who might say, "Let's not preach doctrine and theology, let's just preach Christ." I will then ask, "Who is Jesus Christ, what has He surely done, what is He surely doing, What will He most surely do in time and eternity? Why has Jesus Christ saved you and why do you love Him?" As soon as one answers these questions, I will reply, "You are d eclaring doctrine and theology. Paul spent 11 chapters of a whole epistle specifically doing the same thing."

If we are going to preach the gospel, we are commanded to preach the truth about God, the truth about man, and the tru th about the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The gospel of God is not contrary to the truth of God. To depart from pre aching and teaching truth, is to depart from preaching the whole counsel of the gospel.

Rolfe Barnard said this, "Today's gospel calls on men to stand up for God; the gospel commands men to bow the knee a nd confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The two-fold message of evangelism is (1) all flesh is grass, and (2) behold your G od! It is the message which strips man of all glory and gives all the glory to Christ. The result of preaching the gospel of God's glory will be a sense of the awful presence of God, breaking the hearts of sinners and bringing them to the feet of Christ for cleansing. Gone will be the voice of the proud sinner who stands in the church, beset on every side by soul wi nners, debating whether or not he will recognize the Lord and let God save him. Gone will be the voice of the self- richte ous sinner who debates whether or not he will let Jesus come into his heart. Instead we will hear broken hearts and cont rite spirits cry."

"Depths of mercy can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?"

-Rolfe Barnard

Rolfe Barnard wrote a sermon on John 6:59-61 called "Does This Offend You?" In this sermon he expounded on these 3 points:

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ Preached the Sovereignty of God
2. Our Lord Jesus Christ Preached the Total Depravity of Man and Man's Inability
3. Our Lord Jesus Christ Preached the Blood Atonement

(<http://www.sovereign-grace.com/2468.htm>) Source

Sadly many people are offended at the Word of God and the implications of these 3 truths. Is it not also sad if we neglect the duty of correcting those who stray from these truths? Yes, we must correct error in an edifying manner that exalts Jesus Christ. Truth never separated the body of Christ or brought disunity among those who love God. Error and confusion brings disunity. The Doctrines of Grace as taught by men like Spurgeon, Whitefield, Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards have brought edification to the body of Christ. It is the truth of the gospel that brings true God-centered unity.

It is men like these that had a burden for souls and a burden for God to be glorified in preaching and teaching truth. They got their doctrine from the Bible and not from a system of beliefs. Thus, they never strayed from having a burden for souls and a passion for the glory of God. They never preached watered down messages like today's Disney Land gospel. They preached the wrath of God and the duty of repentance.

(<http://www.sovereign-grace.com/2438.htm>) A Burden for Souls by Rolfe Barnard

(<http://www.sovereign-grace.com/2384.htm>) Turn or Burn by Rolfe Barnard

(<http://www.sovereign-grace.com/2378.htm>) The sermon that cost a preacher his head by Rolfe Barnard

Rolfe Barnard wrote another sermon called "Why We Preach the Gospel and Particular Redemption" In the sermon he said this:

"Now will you follow me? The knowledge of being the object of God's eternal love, and the knowledge of being the object of Christ's redeeming death; this knowledge belongs to the assurance of one who has already believed. This knowledge that Christ died for me, that God loves me individually is to be inferred from the fact that one has believed. And it is not to be proposed as a reason why one should believe. These things are just not true. No man can know that God loves him until after he has believed.

Now salvation and assurance must not be separated, but they are not the same. Let me call your attention to two Scriptures—Romans 8:33, which says: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."—Verse 34: "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us."

There is assurance. And everybody who is listening to me now, who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you can say that, and you can rejoice in it, and the reason you can rejoice in it is you are not trusting in somebody who made salvation possible. You are trusting in God Who justifies; God justifies, so who can condemn? Why, nobody except Christ, because Christ was the One that died, and Christ was the One that was raised, and Christ is the One Who makes intercession for us." -Rolfe Barnard

(<http://www.sovereign-grace.com/2313.htm>) Source

Paul Washer preached a sermon on this subject also. May God grant grace and strength for Paul Washer to preach it again.

(<http://media.sermonindex.net/15/SID15076.mp3>) Particular Redemption, Mission by Paul Washer

Charles Spurgeon said this, "A redemption which pays a price, but does not ensure that which is purchased -- a redemption which calls Christ a substitute for the sinner, but yet which allows the person to suffer - is altogether unworthy of our apprehensions of Almighty God. It offers no homage to his wisdom, and does despite to his covenant faithfulness. We could not and would not receive such a travesty of divine truth as that would be. There is no ground for any comfort whatever in it." (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Sermons, Vol. 49, p. 39)

George Whitefield considered this doctrine an issue when he said this in a letter to John Wesley, "I would hint further, that you unjustly charge the doctrine of reprobation with blasphemy, whereas the doctrine of universal redemption, as you set it forth, is really the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God, and the merit of his blood. Consider whether it be not rather blasphemy to say as you do, "Christ not only died for those that are saved, but also for those that perish." -George Whitefield

I plead with you not to discourage discussion of the doctrines of grace. I agree that we should avoid camp names that bring unnecessary division. The man of God is called to teach the scriptures and he is called to be a man filled with the co

compassion of Jesus Christ. We are commanded to preach the Word and to follow Paul's example to declare the whole counsel of God.

I used to follow Wesleyan and Anabaptist doctrine for almost 2 years of my beginning days with the Lord. For years I struggled with assurance in the promises of God and I often would fail to preach justification by the imputed everlasting righteousness of Christ. Rather, I would preach as though sinners had the ability to justify themselves by their will and running. Many times I would go through dark seasons of despair because I believed that God's wrath came back upon me in my failures in temptation. I used to listen to Ravenhill a lot and many times after listening to him, I was left in a place feeling condemned with no hope... primarily because of my own lack of Faith in future Grace and secondly because there was a lack of the exaltation of the Sovereign Grace of God in Ravenhill's preaching. I know other godly men who have had the same experiences. Ravenhill has been a blessing on his exhortations to pray. But, we will not be able to battle the real sin behind prayerlessness if we are not directed to trust in the future promises of God's Grace. Unbelief in the promises of God always results in a lack of God-centered prayer.

John Wesley wrote a letter to His brother Charles about his lack of assurance. It was written nearly 28 years after John Wesley's conversion.

John Wesley wrote, "In one of my last I was saying that I do not feel the wrath of God abiding on me; nor can I believe it does. And yet (this is the mystery), I do not love God. I never did. Therefore I never believed, in the Christian sense of the word. Therefore I am only an honest heathen... And yet, to be so employed of God! And so hedged in that I can neither get forward nor backward! Surely there was never such an instance before, from the beginning of the world! If I ever have had that faith, it would not be so strange. But I never had any other evidence of the eternal or invisible world than I have now; and that is none at all, unless such as faintly shines from reason's glimmering ray. I have no direct witness (I do not say, that I am a child of God, but) of anything invisible or eternal. ... "And yet I dare not preach otherwise than I do, either concerning faith, or love, or justification, or perfection. And yet I find rather an increase than a decrease of zeal for the whole work of God and every part of it. I am borne along, I know not how, that I can't stand still. I want all the world to come to what I do not know." (Quoted in Stephen Tomkins, 2003, John Wesley: A Biography, Eerdmans, p. 168.)

In addition to this Ravenhill and others have highly recommended learning from Charles Finney. Many have taken heed to these books and time will only tell of the result of this.

Finney himself stated this,

"I was often instrumental in bringing Christians under great conviction, and into a state of temporary repentance and faith... falling short of urging them up to a point, where they would become so acquainted with Christ as to abide in Him, they would of course soon relapse into their former state".

One of Finney's contemporaries registered a similar assessment, but more bluntly:

During ten years, hundreds, and perhaps thousands, were annually reported to be converted on all hands; but now it is admitted, that real converts are comparatively few. It is declared, even by himself, that "the great body of them are a disgrace to religion".

B. B. Warfield cited the testimony of Asa Mahan, one of Finney's close associates,

...who tells us—to put it briefly—that everyone who was concerned in these revivals suffered a sad subsequent lapse: the people were left like a dead coal which could not be reignited; the pastors were shorn of all their spiritual power; and the evangelists—"among them all," he says, "and I was personally acquainted with nearly every one of them—I cannot recall a single man, brother Finney and father Nash excepted, who did not after a few years lose his unction, and become equally disqualified for the office of evangelist and that of pastor."

Thus the great "Western Revivals" ran out into disaster. . . . Over and over again, when he proposed to revisit one of the churches, delegations were sent him or other means used, to prevent what was thought of as an affliction. . . . Even after a generation had passed by, these burnt children had no liking for the fire.

-Abraham

**Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - Paul Washer - posted by Mikey\_da\_rev (), on: 2009/1/3 4:04**

I appreciate this post

This quote sticks out to me:

What the Arminian wants to do is to arouse man's activity: what we want to do is to kill it once for all - to show him that he is lost and ruined, and that his activities are not now at all equal to the work of conversion; that he must look upward. They seek to make the man stand up: we seek to bring him down, and make him feel that there he lies in the hand of God, and that his business is to submit himself to God, and cry aloud, 'Lord, save, or we perish.' We hold that man is never so near grace as when he begins to feel he can do nothing at all. When he says, 'I can pray, I can believe, I can do this, and I can do the other,' marks of self-sufficiency and arrogance are on his brow. -C. H. Spurgeon

I can't put myself in either a Calvinist or Arminian basket because of this type of reality. I am encouraged to continue declaring God's nature, man's depravity, so I can point like John the Baptist "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"

Something I would like to advise on how to obey/repeat is Luke 24:47 and Acts 26:20 where the disciples and Paul are commanded to preach repentance and to call people to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. How do we hold this tension with what has been stated?

Cheers,

Mikey

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/3 7:06**

Quote:

-----Greg's:

The reformation only brought back "some" truths to the Church that were lost. We need a much more fuller revelation of the truth of Church.

It is interesting how that God began this work with the introduction of the scriptures to the common people. Since that time the churches have been adding long standing truths back into the list of things they are willing to believe God for. Often these restorations have come at a great stir.

The genuine born again experience seems to have dominated the last few years. Decision-ism has been challenged.

It seems to me that God is now calling us to genuine church life and a willingness to believe that when we gather He is in the midst of us.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/3 7:36**

Quote:

-----Mikey: Something I would like to advise on how to obey/repeat is Luke 24:47 and Acts 26:20 where the disciples and Paul are commanded to preach repentance and to call people to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. How do we hold this tension with what has been stated?

The way I look at it is to tie the necessity of fruit together with the need to be grafted into Christ through the born again experience. We cannot produce fruit in ourselves. Fruitlessness and the bearing of thorns and briars is a symptom that the person has not been born again.



And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: (Matthew 3)

Why now? Why is the axe laid 'now'? John the Baptist's ministry marked a turning point in human history. He was pointing the people to the fact that fruitlessness will no longer be acceptable because the means (Jesus Christ through the born again experience) of dealing with mans fruitlessness and thorns and briars has come.

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. (Hebrews 6)

The things that accompany salvation includes fruit production. Fruit of the Spirit, that leads to fruits unto God. It is a natural fact that fruit carries the seed of the tree from whence it came *in itself*.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. (Romans 7)

The evidence of 'our' tree is in the fruit it produces. To change a tree you have to change the essential nature of the tree. This requires a divine miracle. Simply put, God changes the essential nature of our tree when we are born again; i.e., baptized *into* Jesus Christ.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Galatians 3)

This is God bringing many sons unto Glory or in the other figure- bringing forth fruit unto God. The axe is laid to the tree now because the Gospel makes provision for this change. God winked in times past at ignorance, but now commands all men everywhere to repent. that which continues to bear thorns and briars is rejected, nigh unto cursing whose end is to be burned. Why? Because thorn trees are good for almost nothing but burning. This is why we don't see furniture made of a thorn tree.

The question then becomes; how can I be born again? Can I 'born myself' again? No. This is God's working that comes about as a result of our right response to Him. When God is dealing with us we must respond rightly. We must surrender ourselves without reservation. When we do this the same Holy Spirit that is bringing CONVICTION will leave off pressing upon the heart and will pour in the love and joy of the Holy Ghost.

Love always comes and joy follows. where there is genuine love- there is joy and peace. Why? Perfect love casts out fear. So the heart is replaced and the mind is renewed. The spirit of disobedience departs and the Holy Spirit comes in. This is not a mental exercise. It is an existential reality so personally verifiable that Paul could ask the people:

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. (Acts 19)

They knew that had not received the Holy Spirit. Notice Paul did not take them through a religious theological mental exercise to see that 'if' they believed therefore they 'must' have received the Spirit. He asked them. What if we did that today? What if we went up and asked someone that had not been trained what to say?

Those that 'received' were baptized into Christ the vine and have become a branch capable of bearing fruit. So to make the connection between John Baptists declaration about the axe and the ultimate need to be born again (but that requires a divine miracle) we have the answer in Hebrews:

While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. (Hebrews 3)

Harden not- is mentioned 3 times in Hebrews. It is the message of Steven that the people must cease resisting the Holy Ghost or as Jesus told Saul it is hard to 'kick against the pricks'. We have to surrender to God and leave off resisting. If we cease resisting- what doth hinder Him from coming in?

**Re: - posted by Eli\_Barnabas (), on: 2009/1/3 9:13**

Amen, Abe. Your posts are well worth reading and praying over. I believe these things need to be said.

It's not about "Calvinism". It's not about the "Reformation". It's about the gospel in the Bible. We must take this seriously!

**Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/1/3 9:29**

Quote:

-----Decision-ism has been challenged.  
-----

I agree, but would also like to point out that this challenge has not been very wide spread. Many are still believing modern day fallacies. Decisional regeneration must continue to be challenged. I believe this "reformation" has just begun.

Quote:

-----It seems to me that God is now calling us to genuine church life and a willingness to believe that when we gather He is in the midst of us.  
-----

Amen.

**Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/1/3 10:09**

Jimotheus wrote:

Quote:

-----

Greetings:

I respectfully disagree in one sense. One can justly say that "Islam is not the issue", or, "Satanism is not the issue", or, "Child sacrifice is not the issue", just as much as, "Calvinism is not the issue." I believe that we as Christians should reach out to the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are commanded by our Lord to go out into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Yes, and Amen. But we are also called to earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. This means that "Calvinism" (as well as any other teaching contrary to sound doctrine) must, and should be of great concern for those who love the truth. Forgive me if I am wrong but if my information is correct, Mr. Washer is a "Calvinist." If this is so, may be Mr. Washer wants to take the focus off of the theology of "Calvin" so as to protect it from biblical scrutiny. If "Calvinism" should not be of any concern then maybe nothing taught as "sound" doctrine should be of any concern. I believe that "Calvinism" (as well as all the other "ism's") in the Church-world should be examined in light of the Holy Scriptures. With all due respect to Mr. Washer, and any other "Calvinist" I do not believe that John Calvin nor his "Calvinism" is the faith that was once delivered to the saints. I believe John Calvin was a little protestant "pope" and a murderer and "Calvinism" to be warmed-over Augustinian drivel.  
-----

Yes my friend. To place ANY theology as absolute without the full council of the Lord is error.

The Lord speaks of freewill and of election. To talk as if it can only be one theology or another... ..is not teaching the full council of God.

**Re: - posted by Jimotheus, on: 2009/1/3 20:42**

Greetings:

Grace and peace.

"The reformation only brought back "some" truths to the Church that were lost".

This statement is the truth. Amen. It would seem that many in our day do not realize this fact. I thank God for what was accomplished by the Reformation, but I have always felt that the Reformation did not go far enough in some ways. Consequently, we have entire theological traditions that have come out of the Reformation, and built upon a somewhat incomplete foundation. I wonder how did "Calvinism" come to be called, "Reformed theology"? It is my understanding that when the Reformation began under Martin Luther, John Calvin was only six years of age.

I want to say also that I enjoy, and agree with the sermons preacher by Paul Washer. I don't want any to misunderstand me. However, I reject the "Calvinistic" disposition out of which he seems to preach. In the message entitled, "Ten indictments" Paul Washer mentioned many wrong methods, and approaches that the Church utilizes in order to win converts, and shows where these methods are unbiblical and I agree with a hardy "Amen." However, to be fair, he introduces a situation of himself dealing with a man concerning salvation. He presented the incident as if to suggest that it was the right method of bringing people to Christ. But just as all the other methods he denounced are not found in scripture, his way of dealing with the man is not found in scripture either. No one in the bible dealt with prospective converts in this manner as he dealt with this man, and yet (thank God) this man was born-again.

I would like to say something about unity since someone mentioned it. Yes, it is true that God wants his Church to dwell together in unity. However, this unity must have the truth of the word of God as its foundation if it's going to be blessed by Almighty God. Any so-called "unity" that compromises the faith that was once delivered to the saints is not God's unity as revealed in John chapter 17. Unfortunately, there seems to be an insatiable desire to just "go along, to just get along" by Jude say we should "contend" if necessary so that the truth of the gospel may continue with us.

**Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - posted by boG (), on: 2009/1/3 23:01**

Quote:

-----Amen. Not all Calvinistic preachers neglect to preach man's responsibility. It doesn't appear that Paul Washer is addressing this issue in the Video.

I agree that we should teach man's responsibility and God's Sovereignty. Spurgeon, Whitefield, and Barnard preached both these truths. Biblical God-centered preaching never departs from these truths. Sadly there are some men who love to speak about man's inability... But, they do not have a burden to plead with sinners to come to Christ. We should plead with sinners to flee from sin and cherish Christ. The eternity of Heaven and Hell should bring soberness and tears in our preaching.

Jonathan Edwards said this, "We are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But, God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz. our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and wholly active.

In the Scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart. God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts... These things are agreeable to the text, "God worketh in you both to will and to do." (Edwards, Efficacious Grace, 557.)

How long have we been presenting these same statements? Thank you, brother Abe. When we put aside the biases and the false assumptions (even those that are birthed by some due to doctrinal error), we find that Arm & Calv agree nearly completely -- the main exception being the manner in which predestination is understood.

The only way we can overcome this hurdle of doctrinal schism is to recognize the mystery that is the Christian life. How is it that "God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and wholly active"; and yet, to some this fountain springs up to life eternal and to others the very fountain that is salvation became their eternal condemnation and torment? -- "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world" and this light is the "light of men" and the light of salvation to those who believe in the only begotten Son of God... this is a mystery too great.

Calvin was not perfect in his theology, neither was Arminius. Therefore when we follow the progression of Arm & Calv th roughout church history, excluding those branches that deny either the sovereignty of God or the responsibility of man (i e. hyper-Calvinism & (semi-)Pelagianism), indeed, we find that Arm & Calv agree nearly completely -- again, the main dif ference is how we interpret predestination & election. Fundamental Arminianism concludes the **exact** same as Jonathan Edwards, when he says, "We are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But, God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz. our own acts. God is the only proper a uthor and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and wholly active. In the Scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert , and men are said to convert and turn . God makes a new heart , and we are commanded to make us a new heart . God circumcises the hear t , and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts ... These things are agreeable to the text, "God worketh in you both to will and to do."

Anyone who does not stand on this truth is neither Arminian nor Calvinist, but are, as Paul Washer says, "strange animal s."

Quote:  
-----I would like to say something about unity since someone mentioned it. Yes, it is true that God wants his Church to dwell together in unity. However, this unity must have the truth of the word of God as it's foundation if it's going to be blessed by Almighty God. Any so-called "unity" tha t compromises the faith that was once delivered to the saints in not God's unity as revealed in John chapter 17. Unfortunately, there seems to be an ins atiable desire to just "go along, to just get along" by Jude say we should "contend" if nessesary so that the truth of the gospel may continue with us.  
-----

No, the foundation of unity in the church is just that, the church. Why? because this is the church:

#### **1 Corinthians 12**

**11.** But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

**12.** For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, ar e one body, so also is Christ.

**13.** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we w ere all made to drink of one Spirit.

**14.** For the body is not one member, but many.

That is, the church is unified solely by one Spirit, the Holy Spirit of Peace.

It works like this: we may disagree and challenge one another's doctrines, yet, our doctrine of Christ Jesus as Lord of ou r faith and Captain of our salvation is greater than all disagreements. The manifest love of God shed abroad in our heart s by the Holy Spirit outweighs everything else. Wherein we are unified, not by the knowledge of doctrine, but by the wisd om that comes from above, which is: "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwav ering, without hypocrisy." That wisdom which begins in the fear of the Lord; that wisdom which produces godly sorrow w hich produces repentance and is able to make one "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus". That wisd om which leads us to obey Christ's commandments; to depart from every wicked way; to hate iniquity; to love the Lord o ur God and to love our neighbor, even as Christ so loved us. This is what binds us in unity. Therefore, that which ought t o divide us is this: 'If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his br other whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.'

#### **Re: Wesley at a low ebb - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/4 10:13**

Regarding;

Quote:  
-----John Wesley Wrote a letter to His brother Charles about his lack of assurance. It was written nearly 28 years after John Wesley's co nversion.

John Wesley wrote, "In one of my last I was saying that I do not feel the wrath of God abiding on me; nor can I believe it does. And yet (this is the my story), I do not love God. I never did. Therefore I never believed, in the Christian sense of the word. Therefore I am only an honest heathen. And y et, to be so employed of God! And so hedged in that I can neither get forward nor backward! Surely there was never such an instance before, ...  
-----

Something suspicious gripped me reading this and sent me searching for source material. It took quite a bit of the morni ng and interestingly took me across the land where forum waters are more calm and tranquil ... Brothers from SI discuss

ing this very letter - Not sure if it got missed or overlooked but there is some additional explanation in the footnotes, which I will quote in part;

*It was written in a rare moment of leisure and reflection, after a tour of Scotland that could only be judged a dismal failure - and at the height of his marital difficulties, that weighed on him more heavily than he ever publically acknowledged .... The despair in the second and third paragraphs belongs in Wesley's self-portrait. It was no merely speculative opinion of his that faith is a constant risk and that there is no state of spiritual progress in this life from which one might lapse - yet also no lapse from which one may not be reclaimed. Here is such a lapse - under grinding pressures and grim frustrations.*

([http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=3z8V4DgB2iYC&dq=outler+wesley&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=513Swsx8zZ&sig=PjO\\_mJ3HDQIs0OiOBynUlonxJGk&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA81,M1](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=3z8V4DgB2iYC&dq=outler+wesley&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=513Swsx8zZ&sig=PjO_mJ3HDQIs0OiOBynUlonxJGk&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA81,M1)) To Charles Wesley

(With thanks to RobertW, go figure a search through the WWW would end up leading to one of my own dear brothers ...)

Clipping out takes and making them stand on all fours is something I find very grievous. It may well be innocently done, ignorantly done or purposefully done. The latter I found to be more the truth, a sort of "Ah Ha" proof texting to support preconceived notions and it strikes me as very disingenuous, very heartless, very much in this case, like kicking a man when he is down.

The other point of mention is that this is a *letter* - A *letter* not a discourse or a teaching. In all likelihood it was never meant or at the least thought of as being part and parcel of public display. But I am for one nevertheless glad we do have it after all. I want to come back to this and I also hope to not ramble myself and anyone else into confusion as my thoughts turn in two directions ...

Somewhere in this I think is the crux of all of this argument of these seemingly inappropriate trains of thought - This ... disgusting, ongoing warfare over it - The grand C&A. We are still at pains to express just what both the matters are what SermonIndex promotes by its sheer obviousness in a variety of speakers/preachers/teachers and how some of us have either checked out altogether on it - accepted both strains and I would emphasize that word *strain* in a sort of tension. It is the word "both", it is the phrase "both\and" but moreover it comes full circle to even what Paul Washer spoke of in this snippet under discussion; "*Calvinism is not the issue!*" - Spoken from the lips of one who if it must be pressed has his leanings on one side of it -

If one listens carefully to what Paul Washer is saying he is in fact speaking SI language if I might put it that way. *Regeneration is the issue*. He goes on to state the very crux, the very heart of SI;

*And that is why I can have fellowship (with) Wesley and Ravenhill and Tozer and all the rest. Because regardless of where they stood on the other issue they believed that salvation could not be manipulated by the preacher, that it was a magnificent work of the power of Almighty God.*

To go down the other train of thought before I come back again ... If in the strange providence of future circumstance I found myself to be called out to preach and/or write beyond these ... sacred pages (I believe they are in their own right ... at times) I would be surely torn whether to leave the past five years worth of mostly incoherent thought or beg Greg to erase the vast majority of it. Much of it is an embarrassment when I stumble back upon it. Much of it is full of fleshly outbursts, regrettable rantings, even more regrettable misunderstandings. Poor choice of words. Poor conduct. Low ebbs (Ala Wesley). Harm to some brethren I am sure that have either left or gone silent, and those pain me more than all. Or ... would it be better left in its embarrassment, as a humility, as a reminder ... being honest of heart and putting it on display, when it is truly that, is a difficult matter - Sometimes it is mere fodder for gnashing of teeth and cynical, argumentative speculations. What am I trying to say?

Bits and pieces. It's redundant but one of the great overlooking's I have observed amongst ourselves, amongst the discussions and arguments is this penchant to overstate matters. To spell out whole lives in bit sized chunks. We become the surgeons of other men's thoughts and want to distill their lives with their ups and downs into a handful of paragraphs, hold to them and postulate till the cows come home over their Reader Digest condescend autobiographies. This ought not to be.

Great head climbers, we crack their skulls open, speak their true thoughts for them, their motives and so much more on j

ust the scant but of evidence. Whole histories parsed - No room for that strangeness that men actually do not say everyting all at once and very often change their minds mid course - mid stream and most deflating to us, they often very well keep matters to themselves. We just do not know the half of it, but it doesn't stop us form filling in the blanks ... or at least searching for more and better source material.

For the life of me this pitting of one against another is just so much akin to a bunch of gear heads all working on the same automobile, except one thinks it's a Ford while the other is convinced it's a Chevy all the while the stupid thing is a Honda ...

I digress. To go back to the aforementioned train of thought as it applies to the low ebb that we all experience and some of us are just insane enough to let burst through our corpuscles and out of the fingertips ... Was reading just last night from the letters of John Newton and will leave it as consideration;

From the Introduction;

*If there is one thing outstanding in Newton's letters, it is, perhaps, the happy combination between spiritual mourning and spiritual rejoicing. Like the Apostle Paul he could cry with one breath: "O wretched man that I am" and, with the next, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Writing to one of his correspondents he exhorts thus: "You say you are more disposed to cry, Miserere! than Hallelujah! Why not both together? When the treble is praise and heart-humiliation for the bass, the melody is pleasant and the harmony is good." The purpose of God in showing believers the evil of their own hearts is to make them prize more highly the grace and all-sufficiency of Jesus. In this way they go through life "sorrowful yet always rejoicing."*

*Soul exercise is evidence of a healthy spiritual condition. It is at times when religion has been in a flourishing state that soul exercise has been most prominent in the professing Church of Christ. It is the barometer by which we may read the prevailing condition of the church, the spiritual pulse of the Church indicating the strength or weakness of vital Evangelical religion. This should give us some light on the state of the Church today. When we consider that soul exercise is a term which has almost passed out of our religious vocabulary and that more attention is paid to the outward actions of the Christian life than to the state of the heart, we cannot but come to the conclusion that vital godliness is at a low ebb.*

I couldn't bring myself to excerpt only the first paragraph at the expense of the second. But to digress back to the first;

*Why not both together?*

In many, many more ways than one.

**Re: - posted by Abe\_Juliot (), on: 2009/1/4 21:42**

Quote:  
-----John Wesley Wrote a letter to His brother Charles about his lack of assurance. It was written nearly 28 years after John Wesley's conversion.  
-----

You may read the letter

([http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=3z8V4DgB2iYC&dq=outler+wesley&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=513Swsx8zZ&sig=PjO\\_mJ3HDQIs0OiOBynUlOnxJGk&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=1&ctresult#PPA81,M1](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=3z8V4DgB2iYC&dq=outler+wesley&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=513Swsx8zZ&sig=PjO_mJ3HDQIs0OiOBynUlOnxJGk&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ctresult#PPA81,M1)) Here

My motive for quoting Wesley's letter was not to kick a man while he is down. I apologize for not clarifying that. I thank God for the Grace of God in Wesley. My motive for writing this was to comfort those who are going through similar situations. I could wish myself to be alongside Wesley and comfort him as he wrote this. But, he is in infinitely greater comfort now as he takes eternal rest and communion in the arms of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ who has loved John Wesley with an everlasting love. (see Jer 31) I made a strong emphasis on the truth of particular redemption as one of the comforts that God gives to believers. It is this truth that has been my comfort and I believe that George Whitefield's heart for Wesley was to protect Wesley from these seasons of despair by teaching him the truth of particular redemption. I believe

e that you can find dark seasons like this in many of God's people. I have gone through similar dark seasons and have said similar words as Wesley. My motive is to comfort the people of God with truth for the days ahead of you. We are going to suffer. And one of the most precious truths to have burning in your heart in those days, is that God has loved you with an "everlasting love". That is a phrase that has been reduced down to a sing along song that has been applied to God's heart towards people in hell. It is no wonder that those precious promises at the end of Romans 8 have become confusing theology, rather than gems of grace that strengthen us in our weakness. It's that few even acknowledge that they have weaknesses or even their need for these precious promises that God has given to us. Not every one has experienced dark seasons like Wesley did. But, for some of us, they are soon to come. I encourage you to hold on to the promise of Rom 8:28-30. That was a comfort to me when I held my dead son in my arms and kissed him goodbye. Through that promise, God gave me grace to worship God in that hour. I don't want to forget the mountain of grace and peace that God bestowed upon me through one single verse. Hallelujah! As I said before, this is a serious issue. Truth is vital not just in evangelism, but also in our daily walk with the Lord.

When speaking of the precious truth of God's Election of Grace, George Whitefield wrote to John Wesley these words, "...As for my own part, this doctrine is my daily support. I should utterly sink under a dread of my impending trials, were I not firmly persuaded that God has chosen me in Christ from before the foundation of the world, and that now being effectually called, he will allow no one to pluck me out of his almighty hand."

I encourage everyone to save a copy of this letter and pray over it.

(<http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/wesley.htm>) Read Here

The Lord Jesus dearly loves His children. grace be with you.  
-Abraham

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/4 22:26**

Hello Abe,

Quote:

-----My motive for quoting Wesley's letter was not to kick a man while he is down. I apologize for not clarifying that.  
-----

Actually, the clarifying might be more on my end. My penchant for breaking off into generalities I am sure might put things disproportionately. What I found tooling around trying to find source material was that it was generally used in this sort of manner, bereft of any of the footnotes that provide at least some context.

Your placement there within the context of assurance however nevertheless sent me, as it often does wondering if there isn't more to the story.

Ravenhill, Finney, Newton, even Calvin himself and those that would have strong leanings towards that perspective ... To me and I guess I am definitely one of those strange in-between animals that Paul Washer spoke of they all seem to largely state much of the same things albeit not to everyone's satisfaction and I think that is the rub. The sheer amount of ... rancor over it all, still amazes me.

What I do constantly wonder and reflect back on reading through all these various saints is along the lines of "Didn't he also say \_\_\_\_\_"? Whether that be Wesley, Calvin, Finney et al.

Even the same letters we both linked to (nice to have source material) found some great things Wesley spoke of just going back and forth in the surrounding letters. A great humility and willingness to be corrected amongst others.

Yet again, I would take up the mentions earlier and also wonder, for instance;

Quote:

-----B. B. Warfield cited the testimony of Asa Mahan, one of Finney's close associates,

...who tells usÂ—to put it brieflyÂ—that everyone who was concerned in these revivals suffered a sad subsequent lapse: the people were left like a de



ad coal which could not be reignited; the pastors were shorn of all their spiritual power; and the evangelists—"among them all," he says, "and I was personally acquainted with nearly every one of them—I cannot recall a single man, brother Finney and father Nash excepted, who did not after a few years lose his unction, and become equally disqualified for the office of evangelist and that of pastor."

Thus the great "Western Revivals" ran out into disaster. . . . Over and over again, when he proposed to revisit one of the churches, delegations were sent him or other means used, to prevent what was thought of as an affliction. . . . Even after a generation had passed by, these burnt children had no liking for the fire .

Everyone? Not to strain a gnat or be overly didactic, but again it makes me wonder ...

Nevertheless, appreciate your candor brother and clarifications. Hope you might accept mine as well.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/4 23:06**

Quote:  
-----Thus the great "Western Revivals" ran out into disaster. . . . Over and over again, when he proposed to revisit one of the churches, delegations were sent him or other means used, to prevent what was thought of as an affliction. . . . Even after a generation had passed by, these burnt children had no liking for the fire .

If the elect be elect, how can anything effect them? It seems to me that if Finney and Wesley were wrong all that could possibly have happened is that the non-elect had received a temporary false hope. How is it possible that all the while of the devil could not negatively effect the elect, but somehow the preaching of Finney or Wesley could burn the children until irresistible grace became resistible? (I.e. they had no liking for the fire) In other words all the preaching of universal salvation in the world should have no effect whatsoever on the elect of God if God has unconditionally elected them to salvation.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/4 23:32**

Quote:  
-----John to Charles: "In one of my last I was saying that I do not feel the wrath of God abiding on me; nor can I believe it does. And yet (this is the mystery), I do not love God. I never did. Therefore I never believed, in the Christian sense of the word. Therefore I am only an honest heathen. . . . And yet, to be so employed of God!"

I have given much thought to these words that were only ever intended for Charles' ears. It offers a glimpse into the other side of great men; into the secrets shared among the closest of friends that are never intended to be widely known.

Obviously we have this record and we have to reckon with it. There was a time in Wesley's life when he did not 'feel saved'. Many things had gone wrong and he was likely in a great distress and depression. When he states, "I do not love God and I never did" I see a man that has gazed too long at the marks of the New Birth. He has weighed himself in the balance until he has finally found himself wanting. Almost as if men look for a means of disqualifying themselves from worthiness of God's grace.

This is very very sobering. This is the danger of excessive self-examination. The devil likes to get us examining ourselves in the lowest and darkest hours of our lives; when our reactions are questionable, our mind is clouded and our emotions are running wild. In the delirium he works to switch two words in our vocabulary; Holy Ghost *conviction* and devilish *condemnation*. Once we are confused in these two we are near to making statements such as, "I am nothing more than an honest heathen."

Holy Ghost conviction seeks to lead us back to the right path. It is the Spirit drawing and saying, "Come let us reason together." Condemnation is actually a legal status, but a sense of feeling that God has passed such a sentence can come to us. These feelings we typically call 'feeling condemned'. But our feelings are not God- God is God. Our legal status before God is based on our faith in Christ through the finished work of the cross.

It is simply not healthy to be constantly examining ourselves. So often we want to come off as if we are the real deal. We



want to be an example to unbelievers. But what about when someone reads of you that you don't even know if you truly believed or loved God? These are the worst words one can hear. These are worse than the darkest scandal. No one wants to bear to hear their mentor question whether they really believed or loved God. And how much more can the Devil use such despair to those who look at a Wesley and say, "well, if he didn't love God I may as well eat and drink and be merry- for I am damned already!"

So we see then that excessive self-examinations and qualification meetings really only lead to ultimate and total despair. We need to live before God and allow Him to do the examination. We need to allow Him to deal with us. Some people are like spiritual hypochondriacs. They get on the search engine to diagnose themselves until they have no peace (or assurance in this case) at all. They examine their bodies for symptoms of sickness until it dominates their mind and they can't function. Let GOD do the diagnosing. get about the Master's business and be open to the Word of His grace. You are not the Great Physician- He is.

**Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/1/5 0:46**

Thanks for sharing this Robert. Your reply is worth posting by itself.

**Re: Wesley at a low ebb - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/5 8:40**

Quote:  
-----Obviously we have this record and we have to reckon with it. There was a time in Wesley's life when he did not 'feel saved'. Many things had gone wrong and he was likely in a great distress and depression. When he states, "I do not love God and I never did" I see a man that has gazed too long at the marks of the New Birth. He has weighed himself in the balance until he has finally found himself wanting. Almost as if men look for a means of disqualifying themselves from worthiness of God's grace.  
-----

Am still not convinced this is everything, though it may be part ... And realize Robert you are not stating that this is the case. I have been pleasantly surprised to read more of his letters and the accompanying footnotes. There is a sense of that at verse,

*We love him, because he first loved us.* 1Jn 4:19

Even if it seems a bit tortured in his use. And of course all of this is really a great deal of speculation, especially and accordingly as the footnotes spell out for us - That particular season and stress that he wrote under. To have Charles reply!

I gather a sense of that thing we apt to do under times of deflating circumstances - Blow off steam. That is the difficulty in this arrangement and I would add again that this is indeed a letter, a solitary, isolated incident and does not seem part and parcel to anything he had any other continuity with, whether by teaching or preaching.

But I do think your extrapolations are still warranted nevertheless, that excess navel gazing (something I had become so much of an expert of myself) and self bruising punishment ... I once ran into, as he called himself, a Greek Orthodox believer in a Barnes and Noble. We struck up a conversation and he originally recommended Athanasius to me. Later, we had lunch and talked about a myriad of things regarding the faith, a truly great brother and one of those 'divine appointments' at a time when I was just coming out from under the umbrella of all the WOF peccadillo's and constructs. He gave me a couple of tapes from a speaker that had visited their church and I just might have to go dig them up again ... One of the things that stood out (besides this incredible way they have of singing the Psalms) was a mention of those who have an unhealthy penchant for asceticism - This bent for beating ourselves up. He put in a very lighthearted and humorous way, that I would paraphrase as, *There is no need for you to go about beating yourselves up, God will certainly beat those things out of you that need to go without your efforts, trust me in this*". Something to that effect. It is a very simple thing, but it was just what I needed to hear at that time.

I am really glad in this paradoxical way that this lone letter has surfaced and that it has surfaced here in this context, that is, this post. I want to start another thread, reprinting some of these letters of John Wesley because I think, in his own words just how much this whole great debate is overwrought *at its core*. The things that have occurred here over the years, the things I have often stumbled upon elsewhere, where there is practically a gnashing of teeth over theological constr

ucts, the cynicism and shouts of "heretic", the bitterness and feuding ... it is that very *fruit* if we must be these inspectors after all (that which I have some real issues with in itself) that is so glaring as to obscure whatever *real* concerns might otherwise be cordially discussed rather than debated, truly more like two warriors fighting it out to the death. It is this later form that is most common.

Redundantly, I believe it is what SI presents unintentionally though implicitly. *Calvinism is not the issue* neither is *Arminianism* for that matter. Paul Washer is dead on right here.

A great snippet, a foretaste of Wesley's that might give this all something of the flavor of what has longed burned in me to put an end to all this infighting - Just something to let dwell in the head but more so in the heart;

*"... an opinion contradistinguished from an essential doctrine"*

That in itself I am assured is not enough for some to set sail still on an argument of just what then constitutes an "essential doctrine". But maybe, just maybe a fuller context might add some surprises to just what he actually *meant* in his *opinions* and that which was taken off on it by those who had their own particular slant to grind.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/5 9:19**

Quote:  
-----But maybe, just maybe a fuller context might add some surprises to just what he actually meant in his opinions and that which was taken off on it by those who had their own particular slant to grind.  
-----

Yes. To have caught Wesley at this vulnerable time is quite disingenuous. I think it is akin to an Armenian using illustrations of OSAS folk living in antinomianism. At the end of the day I think it is unfortunate that folk have for centuries spent precious time arguing over this topic. The funny thing is that the older polemic debates recorded in the 1600 and 1700's are so rich and deep that it would do those engaging in these things a great service to read some of them. Truly they were brilliant men.

Quote:  
-----Am still not convinced this is everything, though it may be part ...  
-----

When we had this conversation in the past on the other forums Ron made mention of how Wesley was ruthlessly logical and was not afraid of allowing his conclusions to be as they may (to that effect). This is a man bent on truth.

I agree also with Mike that we have to be careful with asceticism. I am often surprised at how the terms *spirituality* and *asceticism* are almost used interchangeably. I think it is a temptation for many of us that desire to please God. But the thing we must always bear in mind is that our acceptance with God is based upon His grace. God has determined that He will save man by grace (through faith).

I can think of no other relationship we are in that we would be so preoccupied with wondering if we measured up to our relationship with God. Can you imagine approaching your marriage like this? Always thinking you're not 'good enough' to be the spouse. Not realizing they are supposed to be with you because they love you and have a covenant with you? What about as parents and siblings? Do I measure up as a son? Do I please my father? If not he may not love me, etc.

I guess I am saying that if the love of Christ is 'past knowledge' (according to Ephesians), then why do we question it so much? If it is beyond our comprehension- why do we feel a pressure to perform in such a way that makes us worthy of such love? I am not appealing for sinning (on the contrary). Why can we not just take God at His word when He says, "My love for you is beyond your comprehension"?

**Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2009/1/5 10:16**

Mike said:

Quote:  
-----Bits and pieces. It's redundant but one of the great overlooking's I have observed amongst ourselves, amongst the discussions and arguments is this penchant to overstate matters. To spell out whole lives in bit sized chunks. We become these surgeons of other mens thoughts and want to distill their lives with their ups and downs into a handful of paragraphs, hold to them and postulate till the cows come home over their Reader Digest condescend autobiographies. This ought not to be.  
-----

I could not agree more with this statement and have said as much a few times. We humans are works in progress that are not worthy of quoting at so many points in our lives, and yet the Word of God gives us an insight into the despair of Job when he said many things that he later repented of, and the heartbreaking cries of David along with his terrible sin, and all the rest so that we are left to glorify the grace of God.

I was listening to Keith Daniel in his message "The Prodigal Son" in which he made a very simple statement disagreeing with one statement of D. L. Moody's regarding a mother's love i.e. to the effect that it is greater than a father's, and then he went on to say that he was not in any way disagreeing or criticizing D. L. Moody with a warning for anyone else who would take it upon themselves to do so as they have, as he said, simply because his theology does not coincide with theirs... and then he made this statement that is pertinent for a whole lot of our discussions: "when you have won as many souls as he has and have done as much for the kingdom of God, then bring your criticisms, sir, and not before".

It is so easy for us to be bench warming or bleacher players critiquing all those who are bleeding or have bled to win, but may God help us instead of being scribes and Pharisees knowing the law but failing to see the Son, take Him at all His words in the context of the Whole bible rather than select portions that protect our particular dogma.

**Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/1/5 10:32**

broclint

I enjoyed your post and give it a hearty amen. You summed up a lot of what I wrote before reading your post, but I will post my reply anyway.

I would like to add, as a point of clarification, that in my response to Roberts reply about the "letter" I was not casting a vote to side with any particular interpretation of it. I was merely stating my thankfulness for the wisdom and insight Robert brought forth from it. I have seen much damage done by speculation. I imagine it can only be worse when one is dead and no longer able to defend or clarify ones intentions.

That being said, I have heard for some years that it is not totally uncommon to come across passages that portray insecurity in Wesley's letters. I myself have only read his sermons, and while I can highly recommend them, I know next to nothing about his personal letters and journals. I can only image what the world would think if they read parts of mine without me to explain them...which at times I believe I would have to answer with, "I'm not sure what I meant", when questioned.

**Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2009/1/5 11:26**

Quote:  
----- I can only image what the world would think if they read parts of mine without me to explain them...which at times I believe I would have to answer with, "I'm not sure what I meant", when questioned.  
-----

I agree totally, and in fact had that experience at the funeral of my brother when a young man came up to me whom I hardly recognized who had been in a teen class that I had taught when he was about 13 years old. He has gone on to be a PHD in a university far from my home, and he was commenting on something that I had said those many years ago when I was very young in every way, and I could not recall, in the least, the whole scene. I have read old sermons that I have preached and marvelled that it was me who said it.

I thank God that He can see a Simon that He intends to make into a stone, and does not throw us away because of our ignorance, temporary insanity, and youthful arrogance or else this poor soul would have perished long since.

God bless all you dear folk on SI and for, as Mike has said a few times :-), the "ratcheting down" of some of the rhetoric. Ya'll are getting sweeter in spite of yourselves!

I am thankful to have had time to check back in for the past few days.

Clint

**Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - posted by boG (), on: 2009/1/5 16:23**

Insightful responses, thank you all.

I would consider Wesley's self-depreciation to be of at least one of three possible implications:

- 1) he counted himself an unbeliever, a castaway, or a reprobate (**1 Corinthians 9:27**)
- 2) he was particularly contradistinguishing "his own" ability to believe (which is impossible, for the carnal man cannot discern spiritual things), or,
- 3) his statements were not so different from King David, who said,

#### **Psalms 89**

**33.** "But I (the Lord God Almighty) will not break off My lovingkindness from him,  
Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness.

**34.** "My covenant I will not violate,  
Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips.

**35.** "Once I have sworn by My holiness;  
I will not lie to David.

**36.** "His descendants shall endure forever  
And his throne as the sun before Me.

**37.** "It shall be established forever like the moon,  
And the witness in the sky is faithful." Selah.

**38.** But You have cast off and rejected,  
You have been full of wrath against Your anointed.

**39.** You have spurned the covenant of Your servant;  
You have profaned his crown in the dust.

...

**46.** How long, O LORD ?  
Will You hide Yourself forever?  
Will Your wrath burn like fire?

**47.** Remember what my span of life is;  
For what vanity You have created all the sons of men!

**48.** What man can live and not see death?  
Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Selah.

**49.** Where are Your former lovingkindnesses, O Lord,  
Which You swore to David in Your faithfulness?

**50.** Remember, O Lord, the reproach of Your servants;  
How I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples,

**51.** With which Your enemies have reproached, O LORD,  
With which they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed.

**52.** Blessed be the LORD forever!  
Amen and Amen.

Do we question David's salvation and approval before the holiness of God? David certainly did and we all do as well. The Christian life is such a peculiar balance of seeming opposites and extremes.

"sorrowful yet always rejoicing"

"You say you are more disposed to cry, Miserere! than Hallelujah! Why not both together?"

we are dead and yet alive unto God in Christ

we are strong in our weakness

"our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears."

"Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us"

believing in those things which are not seen or discerned by the natural man -- our faith rests in what is unseen and not with what is seen, neither do we trust in what is felt or what we understand with our minds but we rest in the enlargement of our hearts with love by the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost

The sovereignty of God and yet the responsibility of man; etc. Such to say, our theology (at least mine is) should be determinist and yet complementing (bringing to perfection) liberalism.

God loves the righteous and his soul abhors the wicked -- and yet the great mystery of his love manifest towards us: that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. The love of God is an infinitely just and merciful love. How can a just God love those who have sinned against him without loving unjustly? God himself declares, **Proverbs 17:15**, "He that justifieth the wicked . . . abomination to the LORD." And yet, Christ Jesus is both the Just and the Justifier of the wicked! And that is because he alone has fulfilled the justice of God through his perfect obedience wherefore the mercy of God has been declared: the gospel of reconciliation! Mercy triumphs over justice, not because it is greater but, because mercy fulfills the requirements of the law of God; mercy is made perfect when it is poured through the wrath of his holiness, which is summed, "love ye one another". The love of God is merciful and never unjust, yet the justice of God shall be unmerciful to those without Christ as their mediator.

This precarious balance is throughout all fundamental and orthodox Christian thought and doctrine. I continuously see this beautiful design throughout Scripture and we may skillfully use this design to correct and further our theology. Even to such an extent that I am coming to the conclusion that all errors, misunderstandings, vagueness, and heresies are birthed from a lack of wisdom in what love is. For example, the gentleman with his strange conviction to redefine the Godhead, as something other than the blessed Trinity, when questioned "what is love?" proved himself to be unaware and greatly deceived (though he was uncertain by confession behaved himself as though he were wise and understanding, not accepting rebuke). And it is no wonder when we consider that all the law and all the prophets and all doctrine and all Christianity hang upon and consists in these two great commandments: Love the Lord thy God, and love your neighbor even as he has so loved you.

I can say with confidence, we are preaching foolishly (and quite dangerously) if we say that man has some innate ability to save himself or choose God or believe in Christ: the same man who is unregenerate; ungodly; within whom there is no good, no righteousness, neither does he seek after God; lover of self and covetous of his sin; hater and slanderer of God; without hope; without understanding; despises his own soul; proud; arrogant; blind and deaf; carnal, unspiritual, demonic; who hates to retain God in his knowledge and therefore suppresses the truth in unrighteousness (that is to say, the knowledge of the Godhead -- the light that is shining in the darkness, the light that has condemned the world through Christ -- drives him into further darkness, depravity, and defilement so that he might bury or put out, as with a hot-iron, the knowledge of God from his conscience).

Salvation is revelation: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights": it is by the grace of God.

Anyone who does not preach this truth is not grounded in orthodoxy, being neither a true Arminian nor Calvinist. I mentioned this previously, but I can not tell whether it was grasped. This statement of mine would be very easily and quickly understood were it not for the overwhelming media and conversation defining & preaching a false or premature Arminianism (including what I hear from those who are, by their own confessions, Arminians). And would those who confess to be Calvinists recognize and shy not away from or muddle over the doctrine of man's responsibility.

Does man have free-will? He may make choices, true. But if we define man to be "unable" to choose good then how "free" is he? If he is only capable of choosing evil (being unable to choose what is pleasing to God, being separated from the Spirit of life) then there is nothing free about man's will -- he is utterly helpless within himself.

If we define man to be "unwilling" to choose good then how "free" is he? He is a slave to unrighteousness, sold into sin a

and an enemy of God, resisting and despising the Holy Spirit of life -- he is utterly helpless within himself.

Either way, the only salvation for man is the mercy of God in Christ Jesus to deliver us from all unrighteousness.

This is why I have come to define "sin" as: whatsoever is begotten apart from the Spirit of life -- being birthed by a spirit of death, that is, anti-christ. Even the love between a father and his son (or mother and child) which ought to be one of the most sacred, holy, righteous, beautiful, and heavenly manifestations of love is become gross sin. It is filthy rags before the face of a holy God if apart from the Spirit of Christ! Behold the exceedingly sinfulness of sin that we who are evil know how to give good gifts; demonstrating a form of godliness but disdaining the power of eternal life and masquerading as ministers of "righteousness", boasting ourselves to be "good" by our works!

And yet, for the Christian,

**One says**, "we are saved by grace through faith alone, and that not of works!"

**Another says**, "Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead!"

And they are both true.

**One says**, "we are saved by the grace of God according to his eternal covenant, being therefore without condemnation for the performance of our faith and deeds."

**Another says**, "how can we confess to be forgiven by God in Christ and then we be unforgiving towards those who trespass against us (**Matthew 6:14, 15; Matthew 18:32-35**)? If it is the love of God to give (**John 3:16**) and we are baptized by that same Spirit of grace shall we not manifest it by being zealous unto good works and labors of love according to the Spirit?"

And they are both true.

**One quotes, Philippians 1:6**, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

**Another quotes, Romans 11:20-22**, "Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Is one word of God greater than another? They are both true.

Every argument is conditioned: no "true believer" shall be damned! **And hear this testimony: No one objects.** The question is: is it not possible that if I do not "keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a reprobate"? Well,

**One says**, "no true believer shall be a reprobate."

**Another says**, "no true believer shall be a reprobate, 'if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end', therefore we forewarn every believer that the warnings of inspired writ are not empty threats when it is declared,

## Hebrews 10

**24.** And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

**25.** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

**26.** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

**27.** But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

**28.** He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

**29.** Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

**30.** For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

**31.** It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**Thomas Watson** writes:

"'They that feared the Lord': the fear of God is the *sum* of all religion (*Eccles. 12:13*). ... God is so great that the Christian is afraid of displeasing him, and so good that he is afraid of losing him.

...

**Objection:** But are not we bidden to serve God without fear (*Luke 1:74*)?

**Answer:** We must not fear God with such a fear as the wicked do. They fear him as a Turkish slave does his master; they fear him in such a way as to hate him, and wish there were no God. We must not serve God with this hellish fear, but we must serve him with an ingenuous fear, sweetened with love."

I believe Watson gives great insight into this holy fear of the Lord God: the Christian is afraid of displeasing him and afraid of losing him. Were there no fear of losing him there would be no fear of displeasing him. For how may those foul falls displease God if "all things work to the good"? Truly, the condition remains: all things only work to the good for those who "love him and are called according to his purpose". And from our Lord Jesus, we have received the testimony: "because iniquity shall abound, the love (*agape*) of many shall wax cold."

Therefore, one in much rejoicing in the everlasting promises, says, "no true believer (notice the arguments are always conditional) shall be damned", while another in much fear and trembling before the holiness of God, gives warning, "Take heed, **brethren**, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

Is one wrong and the other true? Is one deceived and the other wise? Is one demonic and the other divine? Is one heresy and the other inspired? No true believer shall be damned; yet must we forsake the warnings of the Spirit "lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" against our beloved Savior? "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Every true believer shall endure steadfast unto the end by the grace of Almighty God, therefore, all we plead is that every believer forget not "that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Peter 1); if indeed the Spirit bears witness that Christ be in you.

**Re: - posted by Abe\_Juliot (), on: 2009/1/5 20:38**

boG,

Amen... very edifying!

I wrote similar statements in another thread. Here are some clips of them.

"...we are to Fear displeasing God because we love Him and we don't want to hate our Holy Savior Jesus.

This is not the same as fear the displeasure of God because we don't want to get burned by the flames of Hell. It is good for a sinner to be shaken out of the comforts of their sin with the terrors of the wrath of God. But, the Child of God has a different motive when He takes heed to this warning. The Child of God wants to persevere in a life of Holiness and purity for the glory of God and for the love of the Spirit. Whereas the sinner only wants to preserve His carnal mind and escape the flames of hell as the Rich man did in Luke 16..."

"Warnings as well as promises are to be taken heed to. The Warnings are a means of God preserving those who are born of God. The Promises are a means of strengthening those who are born of God. True Faith (which worketh by love) takes heed to both gospel warnings and gospel promises. Let us take heed to the warning that God gives and let us take heed His promises..."

"One of the worst things about hell is not the flames or the torments. One of the worst things about hell is that you will forever be enslaved to a heart that hates God. You should fear displeasing the one whom is worthy of your love. Everlasting enslavement to Sin is the worst thing about hell and we should Fear sinning against God. The Fear of the LORD is to hate evil and depart from it. If you don't hate evil, you cannot depart from it. Fearing flames and death is not what God is asking for when He calls us to Fear Him.

George Whitefield said this, "Our sorrow and grief for sin, must not spring merely from a fear of wrath; for if we have no other ground but that, it proceeds from self-love, and not from any love to God; and if love to God is not the chief motive of your repentance, your repentance is in vain, and not to be esteemed true."(quoted from Whitefield Gold)

Charles Spurgeon said this, "We are also to preach the motives of repentance- that men may not repent from mere fear of Hell, but they must repent of sin itself. Every thief is sorry when he has to go to prison; every murderer is sorry when the noose is about his neck. The sinner must repent, not because of the punishment of sin, but because his sin is sin against a pardoning God, sin against a bleeding Savior, sin against a holy Law, sin against a tender gospel. The true penitent repents of sin against God, and he would do so even if there were no punishment. When he is forgiven, he repents of sin more than ever, for he sees more clearly than ever the wickedness of offending so gracious a God." (quoted from Spurgeon Gold)"

"...we cannot please God in any way, unless we are trusting the promises of God as we come to Him. For example... Th



The Psalmist writes, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." (Psa 27:13) We persevere and do not faint because God has promised that we will see the goodness of the LORD. God has given us a new heart of Faith that lives forever. Hallelujah! "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live forever." (Psa 22:26) The Lord gave me a verse in Psalm 23 a few years ago to comfort me when I was fearing that I might lose my salvation and perish in the end. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." (Psa 23:6) Oh, that word "surely" became a precious promise to my weary soul in those dark days of despair. Another promise that the Lord gave me was in 1 John 5.

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1Jn 5:18)"

"It's comforting that a man of God like David needed precious promises like these to strengthen his Faith in God. How much more do I need these promises? Brethren, let us lay hold on these precious promises and exhort each other to trust in God to be the author and finisher of our Faith. May the Lord grant us an increasing Fear of God.

Jesus never told his disciples to fear death or fear hell. He said "Fear Him" who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil... it is to hate sinning against our beautiful precious Saviour.

The Fear of death and the fear of going to hell will not produce hatred towards sin. Rather, it produces sin... because we are not serving God by trusting in his redemption promises for His people. If we fear that we might end up on hell it proves that we presently do not have assurance nor are we presently trusting in the promises of God. This is a very serious matter.

I have some questions and exhortation for those who believe that a born again believer might end up in hell:

Do you have assurance that you will endure unto the end? Do you have assurance that God will save you and keep you in the fear of the LORD all the days of your life?

If you have the hope of eternal life that brings purity of heart (1Jn 3:1-3), you must have assurance of these truths... for God has promised.

If you do not have assurance of these promises... then you need to examine yourself and see if you are in the Faith, because Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. (read Heb 11)"

-Abraham

**Re: - posted by awakenwithin (), on: 2009/1/5 22:33**

thank you brothers for being faithful to be men of the word, great post.  
Let press to lift up the gospel as the bible says

Amen  
charlene

**regarding the ridiculous claims of many on this forum - posted by int3grity (), on: 2009/1/5 22:55**

I would just like to quote Charles Spurgeon in answer to the often ridiculous and egregious statements some people make regarding "Calvinism" on this forum. Here it is:

"The most infamous allegations have been brought against us, and sometimes, I must fear, by men who knew them to be utterly untrue: and, to this day, there are many of our opponents, who, when they run short of matter, invent and make for themselves a man of straw, call that John Calvin and then shoot all their arrows at it. We are not come here to defend your man of straw — shoot at it or burn it as you will, and, if it suit your convenience, still oppose doctrines which were never taught, and rail at fictions which, save in your own brain, were never in existence." - Charles Spurgeon



**Re: regarding the ridiculous claims of many on this forum - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2009/1/6 0:26**

It is sad to see such large posts with many quotes, as if that was the more "convincing" answer to the mind of men who read them.

The most **important** truth is simply is: Christ In You?

And "are you walking with Christ daily?"

And "are you free from sin?"

These things are 1 million times more important then knowing a correct theology. What a shock and surprise it will be in heaven to many who had only theology and not **life** and "intimate" relationship with Christ.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/1/6 0:46**

Quote:

-----These things are 1 million times more important then knowing a correct theology. What a shock and surprise it will be in heaven to many who had only theology and not life and "intimate" relationship with Christ.  
-----

Amen. It will be an amazing thing on that day, when we see the despised men of "incorrect theology" - the Wesleys and Finneys and Manzes - and gaze upon their astounding promiximity to the throne of God in relation to many of those who had the "correct theology" but none of the vitality, no experiential life in that which they professed. Sadly, it will be the first and last revelation for many of us...and it will be too late to do anything about it. How embarrassing it will be when we realize all our vacuous discoursing and proof-texting and context-quoting did nothing at all but unmask the deficit in our own understanding of God's ways. A paradox indeed.

God's assessment of Job's over-talkative friends often come to mind. His ways are not ours.

**Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/1/6 1:20**

Reminded me of this:

A man once asked Mr. Whitefield whether he would see Mr. Wesley in heaven.

The striking answer was:

“No, sir, I fear not. He will be so near the throne, and I shall be at such a distance, that I shall hardly get a sight of him.”

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/1/6 5:18**

thank you greg for your reply, i have come more and more recently to understand further for myself that it is the life in us that is more important.

whifield had life, wesley had life. they had different doctrines but both had life.

we so easy substitute life with knowledge, substitute God with doctrines.

as i was in a discussion in my church youthgroup i heard the brother responsible for the group say this to a visitor. the topic was cal vs arm. he said

"shame on me if my life is less then those i say have wrong doctrine"

shame on me if my life, my love my reality with god is less then those i say have wrong doctrine. its a scandal, its what the religious of jesus days said of jesus. they had correct doctrine, they had it, but they had not life.

oh brethren! how long shall doctrines and differences separate us from the vital reality of the life of God in us?

yes doctrines have their place, but if not life is there, not just believe a doctrine to be right...but if that doctrine dont set us free from sin and self it is worthless. no matter if it is tulip or weslyan theology. its worthless and vain.

what matters is life and love. behold the anabaptists, you may say some of your theology was not perfect, yet those who had in that time "correct" doctrine didnt come up to their level of life in reality.

what good is my knowledge of scripture and doctrines if i am not as a light shining forth the life of God flowing through me?

this is why people have been so turned off from your/mine christianity, we have a bunch of doctrines with so little life. people are dead and need life not doctrines and quotes. yes quoting men who had life is good, but it does not produce it in me or anyone else, only life reproduce life.

let us live brethren, seek life not theology.

we have filled our minds with knowledge while our hearts are empty of life and love in reality, seeing we so easily refute calvinism with criticism and sharp remarks or arminians.

while we have yet to attain to anything near the life finney, wesley, edwards had etc.

what an unreality!

shame on me, shame on me.....

may God grant repentance and life

**Re: - posted by Abe\_Juliot (), on: 2009/1/6 14:30**

Quote:

-----Amen, Abe. Your posts are well worth reading and praying over. I believe these things need to be said.

It's not about "Calvinism". It's not about the "Reformation". It's about the gospel in the Bible. We must take this seriously!

-----

Amen. let us remember that it is the gospel that is the power of God for our daily walk with the Lord. Sadly, for many the gospel is the door rug that we step on upon conversion and from there we cease to glory in the gospel daily.

Brethren, if you love the gospel, you must live by it. It should grieve us when truths of the gospel are altered. This will effect your walk and others who hear you. That is why I gave the quotes from Finney and Wesley. Those are facts that they themselves testified of. It really does not matter how we feel about it. Theology and doctrine matters in daily living because the truth of the Word of God matters in daily living. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. God breathes upon us not only His Spirit, But also truth. It is an error to separate truth from the spirit with catchy revival phrases that have an appearance of holiness... Yet lacking the truth of the gospel. We are to Worship God in spirit and in truth. Making an emphasis on the Spirit in order to shun biblical truths that offend people is side stepping issues that need to be addressed. Brethren, be not deceived.

-Abraham

**Re: - posted by Abe\_Juliot (), on: 2009/1/6 14:46**

I spoke with Lane Chaplin about this thread and he said something that is worth sharing.

He said this, "...Another thing is about the self-refuting position. Very often, you'll hear someone tell you, "Yes, we shouldn't be arguing this stuff." and then they proceed to present why in the form of an argument. It's not good. Technically it's a hypocritical position. If I say, "I don't want to argue this" and I believe in the opposite position then argue why we shouldn't argue it while throwing in my own theology in there, I'm being a hypocrite. It's a position that's taken by those who either haven't thought their theology through so they'd rather hold on to what they believe than find out if it's actually true, or they have thought it through, knows that it won't stand up, then, to avoid having it scrutinized and the truth coming out, they suppress discussion. At this point, I have more respect for the atheist who disagrees with me but will actually tell me why and say that it's debatable than this kind of mentality. So when someone says that we shouldn't argue or debate this issue, very often you'll see them argue or debate why immediately afterward and in that argument, you'll see them advocating their own position which 99 out of 100 times is Arminianism (in a Christian context).

So, in short, I think we should discuss Calvinism because if Calvinism is what the Bible teaches, then we need to proclaim what the Bible teaches. If it isn't then we don't. What it comes to now, though, is which side wants to hold up their view to scrutiny and which side wants to suppress discussion about it. I think that says volumes about how each side holds up." -Lane Chaplin

-Abraham

**Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/1/6 15:29**

Honestly, I fail to see how the realization of the total depravity of lost man, the sovereignty of a holy God, the full atonement of Christ for His people, the power of the Spirit to draw sinners, and God's gracious preservation of His flock is **not** the issue. It is the issue. It's the issue in personal growth in piety, it's the issue in evangelism, it's the issue in church practice, it's the issue in teaching children, it's the issue in teaching adults. Perhaps I am way off the mark here (may the Lord give me light), but these seem like hugely important teachings that effect many areas of Christian practice.

Which Christ are walking with if we are not preaching truth about Christ?

Brothers, I believe one thing we must understand is that you cannot separate godliness from sound theology. You may characterize those who preached/preach grossly distorted views of salvation as "moral" or "zealous", but Biblical godliness has a connection to believing Biblical truths.

**Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - posted by boG (), on: 2009/1/6 15:41**

Quote:

-----Do you have assurance that you will endure unto the end? Do you have assurance that God will save you and keep you in the fear of the LORD all the days of your life?

If you have the hope of eternal life that brings purity of heart(1jn 3:1-3), you must have assurance of these truths... for God has promised.

If you do not have assurance of these promises... then you need to examine yourself and see if you are in the Faith, because Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. (read Heb 11)"

Amen.

Quote:

-----It is sad to see such large posts with many quotes, as if that was the more "convincing" answer to the mind of men who read them.  
-----

Brother Greg, if I may lay out my heart in this. I recognize that many of the forums writers here are servants of Christ, ministers of the faith: some are teachers, pastors, evangelists, etc. When I consider, what are our **primary confessions of faith** (those things wherein if we do not believe them we are not true believers; ie. Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ), I also recognize that there is yet another set of primary doctrines unique for those leaders who would make disciples. Which is the heart of what sparks these controversies. If our pulpits and street preachers are proclaiming a gospel of "decisionism", that is a great difficulty; yet where did this problem arise? It comes from a neglect or misunderstanding or antagonizing

of these very controversies we are discussing at length. Therefore, after those primary foundations of faith be laid by Christ in our hearts then we are further led on to maturity: where we must be equipped unto every good work of ministry.

This post I have written here is not for adding upon the dump of "all our vacuous discoursing and proof-texting and context-quoting" but for the hope that we might be unified upon that great and powerful truth upon which we all cherish -- "The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him"! Lest this fervent "life" and "reality" we all petition become a zeal not according to knowledge -- a spirit not according to truth (**John 4:23**). It is that precarious balance, again, because we live and die for the Spirit of Truth.

Therefore let us not over-react against knowledge and reason but see that the renewing of our minds be according to wisdom and provoking unto good works; let us then be certain our doctrines of spiritual things unites our faith, hope, and love to sanctify our thoughts and deeds: heeding the commandment "Go! and do unto others." And humble ourselves for Christ has sent us forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves" and bids us "be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

([http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/item\\_detail.php?4817](http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/item_detail.php?4817)) **Evangelical Eloquence: A Course of Lectures on Preaching** by R. L. Dabney

"But, second: the practical definition of Christianity has been fully accepted by us. Its end and aim is holy living. Of this holy life, the law of God is the rule. The believer justified in Christ does not, indeed, look to the law for his redeeming merit; but he receives it as his guide to the obedience of faith and love, as fully as though he were still under a covenant of works. He therefore needs practical instruction, as really as the unbeliever. It must stimulate and direct him in the Christian race, and make him a "peculiar person, zealous of good works." The exclusive preaching of doctrine to professed Christians tends to cultivate an Antinomian Spirit. The exclusive inculcation of duties fosters self-righteousness. The edification of the Church, then, demands the diligent intermixture of both kinds. This precept may be confirmed by the remark, that, as the motives and obligations of all duties are rooted in the doctrines, so the best illustrations of the doctrines are by their application to the duties. The two are inseparably connected as grounds and conclusions, as means and end; and their systematic separation in your instructions would leave your hearers incapable of a correct understanding of either.

But the crowning argument is again the precedent set us by Christ and his apostles. While they were, as has been remarked, doctrinal, they were eminently practical preachers. Nothing can be more instructive than the manner in which the Epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Colossians, and the Hebrews proceed. In their introductory chapters, they lay a solid foundation of argument and testimony for some cardinal doctrines of redemption; and from these, they glide into the enforcement of duties by a beautiful transition. The pastor has here models given by inspiration, and obviously conformed to the nature of man as a reasonable and moral creature."

I believe the great source of divisiveness in our conversations comes from this: "The two (doctrines and duties) are inseparably connected as grounds and conclusions, as means and end; and their systematic separation in your instructions would leave your hearers incapable of a correct understanding of either."

Such that whenever we begin to speak of doctrines (ie. nature of man's free-will, predestination, regeneration, perseverance of the saints, etc.; with all of these being inseparable) and those instructions that determine the context in which we preach, we cannot, without sinning against the words of God, shift our focus away from the pinnacle and perfection of all knowledge and wisdom: "Love the Lord thy God, and love your neighbor as he has so loved you."

So even I myself am being instructed and rebuked in my own manner of preaching and teaching and exhortation. To see that I do not merely fall upon doctrine or upon duties but that these be joined together accordingly as the Spirit has commanded both wisdom and obedience unto evangelical living. Otherwise, though we readily admit we have not garnered a complete and perfect "correct theology", the last thing, I am sure, any of us desires is to get fired up and go out proselytizing making our converts "twice as much a son of hell" because we did not submit ourselves to the Teacher for how to be "as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" knowing how to be a living witness, spreading the good news in word and deed, of Christ and him crucified.

Re: "Calvinism Is Not The Issue!" - posted by boG (), on: 2009/1/6 16:39

Quote:  
-----So, in short, I think we should discuss Calvinism because if Calvinism is what the Bible teaches, then we need to proclaim what the Bible teaches. If it isn't then we don't. What it comes to now, though, is which side wants to hold up their view to scrutiny and which side wants to suppress discussion about it. I think that says volumes about how each side holds up." -Lane Chaplin  
-----

If I might comment upon this quote before another.

The core distinction between Arminianism and Calvinism is: predestination and election. That is it. It is true this distinction has varying degrees of application and persuasion upon the confessed matters of doctrine; however, I would like to clarify this difference to show just how tedious it truly is against the disproportionate sum of arguments.

1) The Source and Origin of salvation is the Lord.

Calvinists say, "it is the sovereignty of God's grace."  
Arminians say, "it is the sovereignty of God's grace."

2) The object of that salvation is man

Calvinists say, "it is a mystery how and whom is elected, it is according to the sovereign will of God."  
Arminians say, "it is a mystery how and whom is elected, it is according to the sovereign will of God."

(I hope you are not confused yet.)

Calvinists say, "man **is not** responsible for persevering in salvation: it is God who upholds him."  
Arminians say, "man **is** responsible for persevering in salvation: it is God who upholds him."

So then, why this distinction? It is a simple thing. It is no different than the doctrine of Christology: "Jesus is wholly (100%) man and wholly (100%) God. Therefore,  
Arminians say, "we do not understand the mystery how one man when presented with the gospel of Christ, the light of life, he takes hold of it and to another he despises it and resists the Holy Ghost."  
Calvinists say, "we believe it is because that man is not elected of God." Elect meaning: one who shall finally inherit eternal life.

What is the difference then? Arminians stress a monergistic salvation that is **cultivated or squandered** synergistically. And, Calvinists stress a purely monergistic salvation that is **evidenced** by synergism.

Monergism: the doctrine that the Holy Ghost acts independently of the human will in the work of regeneration.

Synergism: the doctrine that the human will cooperates with the Holy Ghost in the work of regeneration.

And this is a tedious matter; and, as to the implications of "double predestination" we come to these conclusions:

- 1) Calvinism says, "it is a mystery why God has chosen some to salvation and rejected others: we leave this to the judgment of the Judge who shall do right."
- 2) Arminians say, "God has so desired that none should perish therefore none are refused from the offer of the gospel, yet it is a mystery why all shall not be saved."

I believe the arguments arise when those who confess to adhere to Calvinism begin to make statements as to why God has elected some and predestined others to reprobation. Leave it a mystery, for that is what it is; so stop with the speculations.

Likewise, when those who confess to adhere to Arminianism claim we are saved or damned according to man's choice that is not altogether accurate either, this is also a mystery. That is to say, how did that man who hates his own soul and scornfully resists the Holy Spirit of life change in his affections to even desire to be saved?

Therefore, we recognize that salvation is from the Lord: we are all utterly helpless within ourselves and have nothing to boast save in the power of Christ that works mightily in us. So indeed, "Calvinism is not the issue", the issue is when we (even I) forget our place and speak of the mysteries of God which are neither understood by us nor lawful to be uttered.

tered.

**Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/1/6 18:12**

Hi Brother BoG,

I think there may be some logical breakdowns to be considered in your post.

Quote:

-----Arminians say, "man is responsible for persevering in salvation: it is God who upholds him."  
-----

It seems to me that, if the Arminian can say "God upholds us", they would be forced to conclude that God quits upholding some, since they fall away.

Then, I anticipate the response, "God stopped upholding them when they squandered their salvation." To which, it must be replied that it then cannot be truly said God upholds them, else they would not have squandered their salvation.

Adding the phrase "God upholds them" to the Arminian position on perseverance, in my opinion, is just trying to make it look less works oriented, however, it produces an illogical position. Honestly, It would be more consistent just to leave it off.

Secondly, your characterization of the Calvinist position of perseverance does not reflect historical Calvinism. Rather than "man is not responsible", how about "man doesn't have the strength on his own". Therefore, the Lord graciously gives us the strength to persevere. As Paul says, "for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil 2:13).

Regarding monergistic regeneration, was Paul's salvation monergistic or synergistic? Secondly, did the stone heart in Ezek 36:26-27 get replaced by a heart of flesh because the stone heart wanted to be renewed?

With care in Christ,  
Taylor

**Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2009/1/6 20:51**

Greg Gordon said,

Quote:

-----The most important truth is simply is: Christ In You?  
-----

And "are you walking with Christ daily?"

And "are you free from sin?"

These things are 1 million times more important than knowing a correct theology. What a shock and surprise it will be in heaven to many who had only theology and not life and "intimate" relationship with Christ.  
-----

With all due respect, what a shock it shall be when sincere people are turned away to damnation because they self-interpreted such phrases to include a false sensation of religious experience founded on vague, contrived notions about what sin and the atonement are. Yes, there shall be fairly ignorant persons in heaven, albeit essentially orthodox ones. But many, I fear, will go like Mormons, "Jehovah's Witnesses", and a multitude of modern Evangelicals, down to hell with their own estimations of sanctification and Christianity.

Without light, all is darkness. God has given us the word, that we might be unfettered from error. To be right is more important than to feel right.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/1/6 21:39**

Quote:  
-----With all due respect, what a shock it shall be when sincere people are turned away to damnation because they self-interpreted such phrases to include a false sensation of religious experience founded on vague, contrived notions about what sin and the atonement are.  
-----

With all due respect, I beg to differ. If someone will be turned away at the judgment, it will not be because they held to Arminian theology - or even Pelagianism. It will be because they died in their sin, and there will be equal "Calvinists" as there will be "Arminians" in this damned group. Let's not obfuscate the real matter here.

**Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2009/1/6 21:56**

PaulWest said,

Quote:  
-----If someone will be turned away at the judgment, it will not be because they held to Arminian theology - or even Pelagianism. It will be because they died in their sin, and there will be equal "Calvinists" as there will be "Arminians" in this damned group.  
-----

Paul, I completely agree with you, thus there is some misunderstanding. My point is that it is through the expounding of theological points, such as sin nature and the atonement, which brings men to bear with the reality of their condition. Without clear explanations of what that Jesus did, and what the state of man is, we may have little to differentiate ourselves from heretics who have lots of experience, consider themselves free of sin, and yet have no saving trust in Christ's work.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/1/6 22:24**

Quote:  
-----My point is that it is through the expounding of theological points, such as sin nature and the atonement, which brings men to bear with the reality of their condition. Without clear explanations of what that Jesus did, and what the state of man is, we may have little to differentiate ourselves from heretics who have lots of experience, consider themselves free of sin, and yet have no saving trust in Christ's work.  
-----

Men have all this in the Word of God, which teaches a balanced gospel - a gospel that I have not seen any man preach with a like exactitude as the Book itself. Wesley was imbalanced, Whitefield was imbalanced, Finney was imbalanced, I am imbalanced, and you are imbalanced. We all need each other to preach a balanced gospel, which includes components of both Arminianism and Calvinism. The mature saint is able to reconcile these two without having to comprehend how God does it; the Bible indeed teaches both, and in God's infinite wisdom, the two theological camps are married. I know what I am saying to you sounds horrible, but it's true and I have long ago resolved to put my proselytizing sword down for either camp.

Wesley needs Whitefield; Whitefield needs Wesley - and God used both to teach us a lesson. Learn this, accept this - and if you are unable to find rest in this, please consider finding another website to engage people in these types of debates and endless proof-texting. They grieve the Spirit. This website can no longer host such quarrels, and I say this with much grace and love for you...and for everyone else here, regardless of their theology.

Are we mature enough to accept it?

Brethren, let us pray for wisdom; for the Lord to shower us with wisdom in these matters without partiality.

Brother Paul

**Re: Irreconcilable Differences - posted by savannah, on: 2009/1/7 0:56**

"I stand before you this evening as the servant of Christ, or the servant of the devil." (William Tiptaft)

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from the Father, full of grace and of truth.

John 1:17 For the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ..

John 8:32 And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

John 8:40 But now you seek to kill Me, a man who has spoken the truth to you, which I heard alongside of God. Abraham did not do this.

John 8:44-46 You are of the Devil as father, and the lusts of your father you desire to do. That one was a murderer from the beginning, and he has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own, because he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Who of you reproves Me concerning sin? But if I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:17 the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him nor know Him. But you know Him, for He abides with you and shall be in you.

John 15:26 And when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, that One will witness concerning Me.

John 16:13,14 But when that One comes, the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you into all Truth, for He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will announce the coming things to you. That One will glorify Me, for He will receive from Mine and will announce to you.

John 17:17 Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is Truth.

John 18:37 Then Pilate said to Him, Are You really a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this purpose I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I might witness to the Truth. Everyone being of the Truth hears My voice.

Acts 26:25 But he said, Not to madness, most excellent Festus, but I speak words of truth and sanity.

Rom. 1:18 For God's wrath is revealed from Heaven on all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, holding the truth in unrighteousness

1 Cor. 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth.

2 Cor. 4:2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor corrupting the Word of God, but by the revelation of the truth commending ourselves to every conscience of men before God.

2 Cor. 6:7 in the Word of truth, in the power of God, through the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left

Gal. 2:14 But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before all, If you being a Jew, live heathen-like, and not as the Jews, why do you compel the nations to Judaize?

Gal. 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who bewitched you not to obey the truth, to whom before your eyes Jesus Christ was written before among you crucified?

Gal. 4:16 So then did I become hostile to you, speaking truth to you?



Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, the Christ

Eph 4:21 if indeed you heard Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

Eph 5:9 For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth

Eph 6:14 Then stand firm, "having girded your loins about with truth" and having put "on the breastplate of righteousness" (Isa. 11:5; 59:17)

2 Thess. 2:10 and in all deceit of unrighteousness in those being lost, because they did not receive the love of the truth in order for them to be saved.

2 Thess. 2:13 But we ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth

1 Tim. 3:15 But if I delay, that you may know how to behave in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

2 Tim. 2:15 Give diligence to present yourself approved to God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

2 Tim. 3:7 always learning, but never being able to come to a full knowledge of the truth.

2 Tim. 4:4 and they will turn away the ear from the truth and will be turned aside to myths.

Tit 1:1 Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of the elect of God and full knowledge of the truth according to godliness

Tit 1:14 not listening to Jewish myths and commandments of men, having turned away from the truth.

Jas 5:19,20 If anyone among you goes astray from the truth, brothers, and anyone turns him back, know that the one turning a sinner from the error of his way will save the soul from death, and will hide a multitude of sins.

1 John 2:21 I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth: but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

1 John 5:6 This is the One coming through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by the water only, but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the One witnessing, because the Spirit is the truth.

The issue is Truth.

Jesus is Truth, the Spirit is Truth and "no lie is of the truth."

Exodus 34:14 For you shall not bow to another god, for Jehovah whose name is Jealous, He is a jealous God

Excerpts from "There are Only Two Religions in the Whole World" by John G. Reisinger.

"The false religion of free will, or works, is based upon several unbiblical doctrines...It should be amply clear that this religion of works, or free will, based on a universal love and universal atonement, makes God's whole scheme of redemption depend on man for its success...No wonder C. H. Spurgeon, that great soul winner, called free will "utter nonsense," and universal atonement a "monstrous doctrine akin to blasphemy."

Now the second religion is the message of the Bible. It is the gospel of FREE GRACE...The religion based on free will (Arminianism - If you will ...), and that based on free grace (Calvinism — God makes us willing ...) are two very distinct and opposite religions that differ on every theological point at which they meet. Any individual who piously says, "It is really not important, it is merely a question of emphasis," is either deliberately dishonest or completely ignorant of Bible doctrine in church history. The Synod of Dort and the Council of Trent clarified forever the vital importance of the issue once and

d for all time. I challenge any man to read Dr. J. I. Packer's introduction to the Death of Death in the Death of Christ by John Owen, and then talk about emphasis. Packer clearly shows that free will and free grace are totally different religions, and furthermore, that they are irreconcilable enemies.

Perhaps someone else is thinking, "But does all this really matter as long as we just preach the simple gospel? Are not these theological problems that have no practical implications and only cause arguments and divisions between Christians and are therefore better left alone?" Our Lord and His Apostles thought these things were vitally important. The Puritans and Reformers believed the preaching of free will was the root error. In their minds to preach free will was to overthrow the gospel itself. They felt it was their duty to God and His church to do all in their power to refute the false idea of free will. It should be added that Rome felt exactly the opposite. She instructed her missionaries going into Protestant countries to "begin to overthrow these diabolical doctrines by reasserting the free will of man." The Jesuits saw free grace as the real enemy to their system of works, or rather, their system of free will. These are historical facts!

Read the biographies of Bonar, McCheyne, Edwards, Whitfield, Spurgeon, or any other giant of the past and you will never once hear such God dishonoring and man exalting language. I dare you to read of David Brainerd and try to imagine that Godly man saying, "I had six decisions last night." The very idea is an insult to that Godly man's memory.

Now why did all these men of God, men I should mention who had experienced true Holy Spirit revival under their preaching like our generation has never seen, report the dealings of God with their own souls and that of the souls influenced under their ministry in an entirely different manner than men today? They knew that every conversion was a display of the Father's election, the Son's specific atonement, and the Holy Spirit's effectual call...

Arminianism tells men that God will not, yea, He cannot, do any more than He has already done. Read C. H. Spurgeon's article, "Should We Preach Total Depravity?", on page 7, and see how he emphasized the need to "throw sinners down in utter helplessness." Free will informs the sinner that he is not helpless at the beginning of conversion; in fact this error boldly declares that it is only the sinner's power that can do the job at this point. God waits for the man to furnish the power— the will power. The poor sinner is told, "God has done all He can do, it is now all up to you." Instead of throwing sinners down, this is exalting them. Instead of forcing them to look up to God in utter helplessness to find grace and strength, free will throws God down in helplessness and exalts man as the only one with the ability to win the day!"

"Therefore what He has deigned to speak to us, we ought to believe that He meant us to understand. But if we do not understand, He, being asked, gives understanding, who gave His Word unasked." (Augustine)

#### Re: Theology lesson - posted by LookingtoHim, on: 2009/1/7 1:04

O.k, uhmmm, I'm one of those less than intelligent people that may or may not get to heaven! With my limited knowledge I'm wondering something. Are you saying (just so I don't jump off a tall building with worry) it's o.k. to think one way or the other in regards to theology? As long as you believe what the Bible says and learn from its words, and understand that its teaching both sides??? Also, why does it have to teach one the other or both? All this has done has confused me. That's what I get for reading educated folks posts. :-o :-P

#### Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/1/7 1:13

LookingtoHim wrote:

Quote:

O.k, uhmmm, I'm one of those less than intelligent people that may or may not get to heaven! With my limited knowledge I'm wondering something. Are you saying (just so I don't jump off a tall building with worry) it's o.k. to think one way or the other in regards to theology? As long as you believe what the Bible says and learn from its words, and understand that its teaching both sides??? Also, why does it have to teach one the other or both? All this has done has confused me. That's what I get for reading educated folks posts. :-o :-P

Welcome LookingtoHim. :-)

My friend. The Lord teaches what He teaches. Forget any Cal vs. Arm debates, they are fruitless. Seek the Lord and stay clear of these types of foolish debates.

I look forward to seeing you on SI and getting to know your heart. Blessings my friend. :-)

**Re: - posted by LookingtoHim, on: 2009/1/7 1:23**

Hi, Thank you for the information. :) It's good to debate, I think LOL. If we didn't I think we'd explode, well some would anyways. On that note! My heart is fervently searching God's truth! Plain and simple. I'm what one would call a newly saved Christian, a babe in Christ as it were. I'm trying to sift through all the mumbo jumbo that is out there. And just my luck there is A LOT!!!!!! I try my best to keep to my Bible and what God says, however I do like a good debate time by time. Which is what landed my uneducated butt in this post/debate. HEHE, anyways, God is good and just and I'm gonna search after Him for the rest of my days!!!

LookingtoHim

**What my theology has done to me this year - posted by int3grity (), on: 2009/1/7 1:27**

There are some excellent points on this thread about having our doctrine being only in our heads but not in our hearts. I give a hearty amen to this.

I was just reflecting today on what reality my theology has contributed to in my walk with GOD in the past year. There were some good points and some bad ones.

The bad thing is that, after about six months of wrestling through the Scriptures and concluding that Calvinism is true and converting from Arminianism, I found myself under attack from many dear saints who I love. They forced me to really understand what I believe and be able to defend it while also learning to understand why they hold such animosity towards the doctrines of grace. This caused me to be always thinking about how to address attacks and I became overly intellectual which isn't good if it neglects the spiritual.

This problem is a legitimate criticism of Calvinists. They can become way too filled with head knowledge and seek learning more than longing in communion with GOD.

The positive aspects I realized was that GOD used the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of my position by others to help me understand what it is like to be unjustly scorned and accused. It has caused me to be so much more gracious to believers who disagree with me or are of other denominations etc. I have concluded that I must not be over-critical of a theology I don't understand just because it seems strange or wrong to me. I must understand the theology I disagree with well enough to be able to defend it convincingly before I criticize it arbitrarily. This way I know I understand it and WHY people believe it and it also gives credibility in discussion with those who hold to it.

I have also grown exponentially in confidence in evangelism since I came to understand and believe the doctrines of grace (Calvinism). I used to be a coward and not witness because of panic attacks but now GOD has shown me that salvation is HIS work and I have been able to witness to numerous people every week, speaking the Gospel with authority and confidence, not intimidated by any type of person. It is invigorating and I praise GOD for what HE has done. HE gives us so many opportunities for evangelism that we pass up because of fear.

I end with this admission: I remember when I was very naive and theologically wrong about so much. I was so lacking and helpless that I had to cry out to GOD even for the simplest little thing. Now that I have studied so much, I have confidence in the Truth that gives me boldness but that confidence often blinds me to my helplessness and need that was so much more evident when I knew nothing and was tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/1/7 3:52**

Quote:

LookingtoHim wrote:

O.k, uhmmm, I'm one of those less than intelligent people that may or may not get to heaven! With my limited knowledge I'm wondering something. Are you saying (just so I don't jump off a tall building with worry) it's o.k. to think one way or the other in regards to theology? As long as you believe what the Bible says and learn from its words, and understand that its teaching both sides??? Also, why does it have to teach one the other or both? All this has done has confused me. That's what I get for reading educated folks posts. :-o :-P

hello, you see that man has all doctrines and variations. Gods word is true and real. JC ryle said if your explanation of one passage contradicts another your interpretation is wrong and Gods word is true. i am just so tired reading long articles pages upon pages that try explain away what god has said so simple a small child can understand it. and you are blessed if youre not so intelligent, God has hidden things from the wise and learned. believe scripture. when it says God loves all and wants all to come to repentance it is so. man write 200 pages of books explaining in various ways it is not so. and when it says God has elected some to be conformed into the likeness of his son believe that.

and whatever doctrine or teaching you believe to be true, the thing you must see is if it sets you free from sin, self and this world more and more.

the truth shall set you free.

we can have systems of theology, points and ect.

but the only thing that really matters how much of Jesus you have in the normal everyday life. how close you walk with him and living a pure life out of love to him.

God bless you.

thank you paul for your word, may we pursue this maturity. when i was a child i spoke as a child.

i study my children and i see some of the same patterns in me and others. may we grow up.

**Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2009/1/7 8:55**

1 Corinthians 8:2 - 3 (NKJV) 2And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. 3But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

Clint

**Re: What my theology has done to me this year - posted by whyme, on: 2009/1/7 9:46**

Int3grty said in part:

I have also grown exponentially in confidence in evangelism since I came to understand and believe the doctrines of grace (Calvinism). I used to be a coward and not witness because of panic attacks but now GOD has shown me that salvation is HIS work and I have been able to witness to numerous people every week, speaking the Gospel with authority and confidence, not intimidated by any type of person. It is invigorating and I praise GOD for what HE has done. HE gives us so many opportunities for evangelism that we pass up because of fear.

I end with this admission: I remember when I was very naive and theologically wrong about so much. I was so lacking and helpless that I had to cry out to GOD even for the simplest little thing. Now that I have studied so much, I have confidence in the Truth that gives me boldness but that confidence often blinds me to my helplessness and need that was so much more evident when I knew nothing and was tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

I too have had the same confidence in witnessing since coming to believe that the Bible teaches these doctrines of grace. Additionally, I have much more faith that God will actually answer my prayers for the salvation of family, friends and others since I believe that God is all in salvation. I understand evil, calamity and suffering in the world a lot better now as a result of trusting in God's sovereignty in and over such things. I walk with great hope in my final salvation after understanding the doctrine of perseverance. I do not rely on human reason or persuasion to evangelize because the gospel is the power that gives spiritual life through the Spirit. These are a few of the reasons why doctrine matters. However, with that said, I don't need to judge others for holding differing views but I do want to persuade others of what I see Christ himself preaching about such matters so that they and those who they preach and teach to will enjoy the privileges and riches Christ intended such doctrines to have for His people. I'm thankful for the privilege I afford to read about and share these wonderful truths and think it would be a shame to have that end. Perhaps the issue is not the debating of the truths but rather the spirit of the debaters (including me.)

Re: - posted by boG (), on: 2009/1/7 14:20

Quote:  
-----Secondly, your characterization of the Calvinist position of perseverance does not reflect historical Calvinism. Rather than "man is not responsible", how about "man doesn't have the strength on his own". Therefore, the Lord graciously gives us the strength to persevere. As Paul says, "for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil 2:13).  
-----

You are right, I have been considering it at length and have recognized that "responsibility" was a very poor choice of words because it is a poorly defined word. Allow me then to define it; what I meant by it is exactly what you have said, it is simply a matter of perspective:

Responsibility: "man doesn't have the strength on his own" and yet he is still held accountable (responsible) for obeying the law of God.

Therefore, **one quotes, Ezekiel 18:31**, "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?"

And, **another quotes, Ezekiel 36:26**, "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

So who is responsible then? We are responsible and God is responsible. One emphasizes man's responsibility in this the other tends to emphasize God who takes upon himself the responsibility of changing a man. And yet, how do these two truths intermingle? That is the mystery. How did God harden Pharaoh's heart and yet, Pharaoh sinned against the Lord by hardening his heart: is God become the author of sin? Indeed not, this relationship between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of man is hidden from our understanding.

Quote:  
-----Adding the phrase "God upholds them" to the Arminian position on perseverance, in my opinion, is just trying to make it look less works oriented, however, it produces an illogical position. Honestly, it would be more consistent just to leave it off.  
-----

I can not remove this from the Arminian position because it is the vitality of the whole theology. As I just explained, how does a man make for himself a new heart? He can not do it himself, he is utterly helpless within himself, therefore he must give his heart over to the Father of lights. And, how does he do this, does man simply say, "OK, I have decided within my self, as god and lord of my own heart, that you are going to give me a new heart . . ." Indeed not. The Spirit of God and man are mysteriously joined together in this exchange. The arguments that arise is for the simple fact that we continue to either explain this away as though it weren't this way or we present our opinions on how God performs this miracle. We say, "it is a mystery how God elects someone to salvation" and then begin to explain at length a doctrine of fatalism - which is hyper-Calvinism, that is to say, God is the sole decider in all these things and there is no requirement upon man to "make for himself a new heart" because that is a lie such as it is written in Scripture therefore we must interpret another way.

And to be honest, I do also recognize there are "Calvinists" who would accuse me of presenting hyper-Calvinism (in those quotes I wrote) and falsely presenting Arminianism as the true position of Calvinism -- which would only further prove the triviality and tediousness in these party camps. The true differences are the heaps of opinions upon those things which

h the Scripture has clearly given a seeming vagueness (ie. Pharaoh's heart).

If you believe that God is the elector of persons unto salvation and readily admit his judgment is neither arbitrary nor revealed (a mystery) then by what authority do you oppose and antagonize another who believes God uses man as a means to his own salvation? Will you say, "it is a mystery and I do not know how but I know you are wrong!"

"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" therefore shall we say, "God uses Christian man as the light of salvation to the world but it is impossible that God should ever design to use those heathens in HIS work of salvation."

None-the-less, God is the source of salvation and the author and perfecter of faith. Where would such a person even come up with such an idea? The abundance of God's commandments towards man might have some indication to it (ie. choose, repent, believe, turn, humble yourself, etc.). And we do not overlook or diminish the work of God is all of this, therefore the phrase "God upholds them" is the core of all Arminian doctrine, the single difference is what one means by this: the greatest question of them all, "How does God uphold us"? You may quote many Scriptures but it boils down to the arguments we have already discussed: God upholds and HE warns man to take heed to himself lest you should find yourself a castaway (reprobate; **Ezekiel 33:8-20**). Does this mean God is to blame, if he warns us to take heed to ourselves lest our hearts should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, did he fail to uphold us? The Arminian position merely recognizes these warnings as gospel promises based upon a covenantal salvation. Calvinists recognize these warnings as warnings against those who were "never truly born-again". So either way we look at this it always comes down to: no **true believer** shall be lost, therefore, hold fast to the faith you have received of God and do not depart from it.

Quote:

-----Men have all this in the Word of God, which teaches a balanced gospel - a gospel that I have not seen any man preach with a like exactitude as the Book itself. Wesley was imbalanced, Whitefield was imbalanced, Finney was imbalanced, I am imbalanced, and you are imbalanced. We all need each other to preach a balanced gospel, which includes components of both Arminianism and Calvinism. The mature saint is able to reconcile these two without having to comprehend how God does it; the Bible indeed teaches both, and in God's infinite wisdom, the two theological camps are married. I know what I am saying to you sounds horrible, but it's true and I have long ago resolved to put my proselytizing sword down for either camp.

Wesley needs Whitefield; Whitefield needs Wesley - and God used both to teach us a lesson. Learn this, accept this - and if you are unable to find rest in this, please consider finding another website to engage people in these types of debates and endless proof-texting. They grieve the Spirit. This website can no longer host such quarrels, and I say this with much grace and love for you...and for everyone else here, regardless of their theology.

Are we mature enough to accept it?

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Amen!

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/1/7 16:06

Quote:

-----I'm thankful for the privilege SI affords to read about and share these wonderful truths and think it would be a shame to have that end. Perhaps the issue is not the debating of the truths but rather the spirit of the debaters (including me.)

-----

I am 100% sympathetic to this. It is very unfortunate that these things cannot be shared without them turning into scripture-sluggfests. Personally, I would relish discussing the doctrines of grace if I knew it wouldn't attract all the baggage that goes along with it. I seriously doubt that those who've been granted a change in theology were converted during one of these sluggfests.

In the end, the most important thing to me is to be obedient to the Spirit of the Lord. If these discussions are grieving the Spirit, then they must be terminated. It doesn't matter who is right or wrong; we must agree to disagree and move on. Only then will God begin to bless the situation and open whosever's eyes need to be opened. But while we strive and cut-and-paste and proof-text, we grieve the Spirit...and God withdraws from the entire topic.

Re: - posted by Abe\_Juliot (), on: 2009/1/7 18:52

Brethren,

I just want to give an encouragement. When you are discussing or reasoning for the cause of God and truth... be mindful that God dearly loves His people . Let us have patience with one another as Jesus has been patience towards us. Let us be gentle towards one another as Jesus has been gentle towards us. And truly we do not deserve the least of His mercies and the truth that He has granted us. Therefore let us have a merciful spirit as we contend for the Faith and proclaim the truth.

Such a friend

(Thomas Brooks, "Apples of Gold" 1660)

"There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Proverbs 18:24

Such a friend is Jesus. He is so a friend to every one of His people, as if He were a friend to none besides. Jesus is . . .

- an omnipotent friend;
- an omniscient friend;
- an omnipresent friend;
- an indeficient friend;
- a sovereign friend;
- an immutable friend;
- a watchful friend;
- a loving friend;
- a faithful friend;
- a compassionate friend;
- a close friend,
- a universal friend— a friend in all cases and in all places,
- our first friend,
- a constant friend— "Whom He loves, He loves to the end." John 13:1

-Abraham