

Brethren With Arms Elbow Deep in Calvinism (I)

That there are men within the church advocating the idea of Neo-Calvinism, intentionally or unintentionally, cannot be denied by any honest Bible student. More and more in the writings of some brethren we see the tenets of Calvinism appearing at a tremendous pace. By tenets I mean an opinion, principle, dogma or doctrine that a person or organization believes or maintains to be true. I have no axes to grind, no intention of becoming a well-known writer, nor do I hold any malice toward those whom I believe guilty of the errors that are being presented to young preachers and the weak, untaught in the church. I would prefer not to use names of those who have written on the subjects I shall deal with in this series, but in all fairness and honesty to the reader who is seeking the truth, I feel I have no alternative. To use the name of a book from which material has been taken and not give the author due credit would likewise be unfair.

I cannot begin to name all who are leaning in this direction, but in fairness to those I do mention, may I say they are not alone. In fact, what prompted these articles is the effect some loose teaching is having upon the young. I, like countless others, do not wish to misquote another's position, and if one feels his position is being taken out of context, I would suggest he tell the brethren what he does or does not believe in plain, simple terms and let the issue die.

My brother in Christ, Ed Fudge, who in his first outward 'defense of his teachings concerning current problems which appeared in the Gospel Guardian, Vol. 25, No. 1, May 3, 1973, page 3 in an article entitled "For The Record," made no defense but advised those who questioned the positions he held to purchase his published books and determine what he taught. I do not feel this was any defense, but to give him the benefit of the doubt, I purchased the booklet, The Grace Of God. I am not personally acquainted with Brother Fudge, but believe him to be a knowledgeable Bible student. His booklet has gone far and wide; therefore, discussing it in print does not do him an injustice. I believe he is on dangerous ground and should consider the words of Solomon, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" ([Prov. 6:27](#))

Two Fundamental Principles

(1) "God, by His very nature-because He is God-must both hate and punish sin." This means that sin cannot be overlooked forever, or winked at indefinitely, or simply swept under the rug. On a par with this principle we read of the next. (2) "Man, because he is man, sins." I assume he concludes these two principles to be self-evident. The second principle I question. I am aware "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" ([Rom. 3:23](#)). I do not believe man sins because he is man or that he sins because it is man's nature to sin. This, to me, reads too much like The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches by Edward T. Hiscox. On page 60, in speaking of "The Fall Of Man" he writes, "... being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation, without defense or excuse." He gives as a proof-text, in the footnotes, [Eph. 2:3](#). The nature here refers to conduct practiced so long and habitually that it has become our natural way of living. The apostle Paul speaks of men being by nature children of wrath as the effect (rather than the cause) of our trespasses and sins. The quibble advanced by some theologians that, "We

are not sinners because of sin; we sin because we are sinners,” lays the blame on God instead of upon ourselves where it belongs.

Why Question The Second Principle?

The Bible reads, “They have turned aside (or are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable . . .)” ([Rom. 3:12](#)). This implies a better condition from which to “turn.” Concerning man we see, “So God created man in his own image. . .” ([Gen. 1:27](#)). “And God saw everything that he had made; and behold it was very good.” ([Gen. 1:31](#)). In the NASB “Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and doest crown him with glory and majesty” ([Psa. 8:5](#)). “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” ([Eccl. 7:29](#)). If the second principle is true, then how could a just God condemn man for doing what his inherent nature demands? Later, Ed states that God does not make man sin, and “God did not create him so that he had to sin.” Is the writer unaware of the implications of this second principle? Read all that Hiscox said on “The Fall of Man” page 60, *ibid*. Do you believe man is totally or partially depraved?

Why Does Man Sin or How Does He Sin?

John said, “. . . sin is the transgression of the law” (1 Jno. 3:4). Paul wrote, “. . . where no law is, there is no transgression” ([Rom. 4:15](#)). The conclusion then is that man sins because he transgresses the law. This is proven in the case of Adam and Eve. Was the commandment a law when Moses wrote, “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” ([Gen. 2:16-17](#))? Were Adam and Eve sinners because they were man or because they transgressed God’s law? [Romans 5:14](#) tells the answer for Adam and [1 Timothy 2:14](#) gives the answer for Eve. Does a commandment constitute a law and can we be saved without keeping the commandments of God?

Some Clarification

Let me at this time state emphatically that I do not believe a man can be saved by any humanly devised means. No combination of mere human power and ideas is sufficient to earn one his salvation. A proof-text would be [Luke 17:10](#). His salvation is by the grace of God. It is by the favor or loving kindness or good will of God that we are saved, as set forth in [Eph. 2:5](#). In the next verse we read, “And hath raised us up together . . .” ([Eph. 2:6](#)). Those who advocate grace only apart from keeping the law seem to observe the Passover on this verse. The religious world as a whole has always ignored it. Those who teach grace alone look the other way and men who do not believe baptism essential to salvation evade it. Here is my question: What about this “raising up?” It is not the final “raising up” at the end of time, for these Ephesians were very much alive. It could not be the final resurrection because again they were still in the flesh and alive in the church when this “raising up” was penned. How could they have been “raised up?” Paul explains in three passages: [Rom. 6:4,5](#); [Col. 2:12](#); [Titus 3:5](#). The “raising up” took place when they were baptized. Thus the salvation by grace in the passage will be after being “raised up” (Baptized) and is dependent upon it.

Grace Not Legalism

On page 13 Brother Fudge states, “grace is not legalism.” The definition of legalism given is that it is not law-keeping, but law-depending. Funk and Wagnall’s Standard Dictionary defines legalism as, “strict conformity to law” (p. 728). Ed continually gives references to there being no justification by the law, but admits the texts referred to are

referring to the law of Moses ([Acts 15:1, 10-11](#); [Gal. 2:16](#); [Rom. 8:3](#); [Gal. 3:19, 21](#)). He seems to make the mistake of Calvinism in not being able to distinguish that there is more than the law of Moses in the Bible. Ed knows this as well as any man in the church. On page 17 he affirms the law of Moses was God's law. It was holy and just and good. It was perfect for its purpose. He forgets to tell us what the purpose of the law was, so I shall attempt to clarify the matter for him. "Wherefore the law was our (Jews) schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith" ([Gal. 3:24](#)). "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." ([Gal. 3:11](#)) Paul informs us, "... Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law. ..." ([Rom. 7:7](#)). "... It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made ..." ([Gal. 3:19](#)). (Transgression is lawlessness and keeps company with iniquity and unrighteousness.) The law of Moses fulfilled its purpose, but it was not its purpose to make perfect or to save or give life ([Gal. 3:21](#)). The Hebrew writer wrote, "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" ([Heb. 7:19](#)).

Was this better hope the gospel? Again, "For when Moses had spoken every precept (entole) to all the people according to the law" ([Heb. 9:19](#)). "Entole" is from the same verb translated commandment in numerous passages including 1 Jno. 2:3 defined as "akin to the verb entello which signifies to enjoin upon, to charge with. The noun entole denotes in general, an injunction, charge, precept, commandment." (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, pages 209-210, Vol. 1 and page 203 in Vol. 3.) Can we know God and not keep His commandments as set forth in 1 Jno. 2:3? (KJV, ASV and NASB all use term "keep"). Going back to [Hebrews 8:7-8](#) the writer speaks of the first covenant that had fault, and of the new covenant. What are these two covenants? Are they not the Old law and the New law? Ed mentions [Heb. 10:5-7, 10](#). What about [Heb. 10:9](#)? "Then said he, lo, I come to do thy will O God, He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Brother Moseley in his commentary on this passage comments, (and I agree) "God would not have two laws in effect at the same time. Therefore, the old being inferior was removed to establish the second, which was established on better promises. ([Heb. 8:6](#)) Thus, a covenant establishing obedience will replace the covenant that contained ineffectual sacrifices." Is this not in harmony with [Romans 7:1-4](#)? "For by grace have ye been saved through faith" ([Eph. 2:8](#)). This expresses the divine part and the human part of salvation by the words "grace" and "faith" respectively. The grace or favor involved in salvation is of course divine favor; while faith is a human exercise. Neither the divine part nor the human part can successfully be dispensed with; both are necessary.

Faith And Legalism

If it were not for the grace of God no one could be saved, and it is equally true that if a man does not exercise faith he cannot be saved. "But without faith it is impossible to please him. ..." ([Heb. 11:6](#)). When we speak of faith, what kind of faith is needed? It is that faith which worketh by love. ([Gal. 5:6](#)). The grace of God is inseparably connected with the word of God. We have access to the grace of God by faith ([Rom. 5:1-2](#)), but faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. ([Rom. 10:17](#)). We see then that grace of God covers only what is by faith and nothing more. We are under the grace or favor of God only when we submit to the purposes of God revealed in the gospel. According to the Bible doctrine of grace, man is not the passive recipient of God's grace, but must

comply with the conditions of faith which God has ordained in order to enjoy the favor of God.

Denominationalists have for years called us “legalists.” Brethren who are liberal on the institutional and Herald Of Truth question also called us legalist. If belief in obeying God’s commands makes one a legalist, I must confess I am a legalist. In so doing, I find a legalist has good company. Jesus was a legalist when He made the following statement: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate . . .” ([Lk. 13:24](#)). Jesus sent the apostles out to bind and to loose what had been bound and loosed in heaven. ([Matt. 16:19](#); [18:18](#)). In the parable on fruitbearing, Jesus shows fruitbearing to be an essential if we hope to receive the reward. Notice also the Words of Jesus in Jno. 4:34; 6:38. Paul was one who would be classed as a legalistic and egotistical man by today’s standard. Read 1 Cor. 9:27 and 2 Tim. 4:7-8. The writer of Hebrews was legalistic in [Heb. 12:1](#). Here he speaks of running the race “with patience” that is set before us. This term includes “both passive endurance and active persistence.” (Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament, page 537, Vol. 4.)

Obedience To The Law Of Christ Is Essential

By obedience I mean complying with or submission to command, prohibition, law or duty. Obey means to act in accordance with; be guided by; to obey the law. (Funk and Wagnall, p. 871) Vine, on page 124 of Vol. 3, in reference to the “obey” of [Heb. 5:9](#) notes: “to listen, attend, and so, to submit, to obey, is used of obedience (a) to God . . .” We shall look at some synonyms of law: rule, edict, regulation, command, commandment, mandate, (Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms by Joseph Devlin.) Concerning the law of Christ, I make mention of [Gal. 6:2](#); “. . . the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. . .” ([Rom. 8:2](#)); “The perfect law of liberty” ([Jas. 1:25](#)). And if lawkeeping is unimportant, how can a Just God judge us by the law of liberty ([Jas. 2:12](#))? Paul full well knew his responsibility in keeping the law of God as stated in 1 Cor. 9:21. Paul states, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” ([Titus 2:11-12](#)). Why teach us laws to live by if we do not need them? Also, if a person is not under law as a condition of salvation, then his violation of law would not affect his salvation; yet the scriptures teach that the “lawless” and “ungodly” cannot inherit eternal life. If one’s obedience, or lack of it, to the law of Christ is immaterial, then without saying it in so many words we are teaching “once in grace always in grace” and the impossibility of falling. How can one sin if he does not have to keep the law of Christ? Without law how does one know he is a sinner?

Doers Of The Law

In Paul’s writings he pens the following, “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified . . .” ([Rom. 2:13](#)). The context in this chapter shows the Jews putting too much stress on their hearing the law and their knowledge of the law. As a result, they neglected the doing of the law. That was a fatal mistake; for not hearers but doers of the law were justified. Absolute justification by the law could be had only by perfect obedience to the law. But no one kept the law perfectly, and for that reason the law justified no one. Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” ([Matt. 7:21](#)). Talking of those who did not do His will he said, “. . . I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” ([Matt. 7:23](#)). In short, depart from Me you that work without law, the lawless ones. In verse 24 He speaks of

the wiseman, who heard and was a doer of the word. In verse 26 He speaks of the foolish man who heard but was not a doer of the word. James said, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" ([Jas. 1:22](#)). He also mentions one that hears but does not do in verses 23-24. Then sums up with, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deeds" ([Jas. 1:25](#)).

Final Thoughts On Grace And Law

Something unbecoming of our brother is expressed on pages 14, 15, 17 and 18, ("Here are the rules; keep them and be saved-good luck.") Perhaps I am overly critical, but it reminds me of the innuendo of Baptist ridiculing baptism, "If one is saved by baptism he comes up and then has to outrun the devil from the creek to heaven, if baptism is essential and one can fall from grace." My last thoughts in this article are these: If man plays no part in his salvation, I would like someone to explain to me Peter's statement, "... Save yourselves from this untoward (or crooked) generation" ([Acts 2:40](#)). Also, what did Paul mean when he said, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and do of his good pleasure" ([Phil. 2:12-13](#)). God works in us through the neglected statement made in [Eph. 2:10](#), "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The idea that the gift of [Eph. 2:9](#) means we can do nothing is false. We have to do the one thing that God cannot do for us; that is, receive the gift by obedience and baptism. If the old Calvinistic position were correct and we can do nothing, then the salvation would be as universal as the gift and the giver. Who will take this position? When told to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is knowledge of Jesus essential? Does it come to us miraculously or must we study and do something to attain it? James wrote, "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" ([Jas. 4:17](#)). To say we will do it because we are saved by grace will lead us down the path of one young brother who has taken the position baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace. Brethren, tell us plainly where you stand and what you believe (1 Pet. 3:15; [Col. 4:6](#) and give us book, chapter and verse, 1 Pet. 4:11).

My next article on "Brethren

Brethren With Arms Elbow Deep in Calvinism (II)

Faith Versus Works

In my first article, I used, the term “Neo-Calvinism.” Realizing some are not familiar with the term “Neo” I shall define it. According to Funk and Wagnall’s Standard Dictionary of 1961, Vol. 2, page 850, it is a combining form defined as new; recent; modern or modified form of that with which it is combined. In short, brethren today are teaching what is known as “Neo-Calvinism.” In reality it is the same old Calvinism with a new dress to make it appealing. It is new only to those in the church who are now teaching it. As the writer of Ecclesiastes said, “. . . and there is no new thing under the sun.” ([Eccl. 1:9](#)). A check of the tenets of Calvin goes back hundreds of years. Recently we have laid this teaching at the feet of the young preachers, but now many older men believe it or lean toward it also, or else they are trying to protect and/or defend their proteges. Whether they are young men that do not know better, or older men that should know better, both are hesitant to be scrutinized when directly confronted with the issue as to what they actually believe on the matter. They will say, as we shall see, that they believe something, then deny the implications or maintain they have been misquoted or misunderstood. Actually, it is hard to tell what some believe because they will vacillate like a sectarian affirming and denying the same proposition. We see brethren touring the country trying to convince brethren on “faith only,” “grace only,” etc., saying they do not believe these tenets, but that they can tolerate them with no serious consequences. I believe, as David of old, “Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way” ([Psa. 119:104](#)). Amos stated, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed” ([Amos 3:3](#)). I know this refers to man and God walking together, but it is also applicable in any endeavor. The Lord said, “No man can serve two masters . . .” ([Matt. 6:24](#)). “He that is not with me is against me . . .” ([Matt. 12:30](#)). The above could not, or would not, compromise or tolerate error and neither can I.

What Prompted This Series?

In the Spring of 1973, after a gospel meeting, the preacher holding the meeting, my wife, a young preacher and I were discussing some of the present issues. During the course of the conversation, the young preacher made the statement that what the church needs today is scholars from its own rank, and that proponents of new interpretations, the young preachers of today, would be the recognized scholars of tomorrow. He stated that in attending Florida College he gained nothing except from Homer Hailey, who he said taught him to think for himself. I do not believe his conception is what Brother Hailey had in mind. The boy talked for some time and then we began to question him. When he longer held the floor, he became deathly quiet and in a short time bid us farewell and departed. About a month later, in another state, he preached from the pulpit “Faith Only” and was questioned from the audience as to whether he believed in “Faith Only” and he admitted twice publicly he did. Upon the conclusion of the evening service, arrangements were made by brethren who questioned him to have a meeting and discuss the teaching. This meeting was held and the following is a part of the discussion, from a tape, that was not obtained from any in disagreement with this young preacher.

The Discussion

At the beginning of the discussion, the young preacher asked if it was to be a discussion about his sermon. When informed it was, he wanted a show of hands as to who

questioned his teaching. His desire was to discuss these matters privately with those who openly opposed him and not discuss them with, or in the presence of, those who were undecided or who agreed with him. The brethren wanted a meeting for this discussion rather than a hassle in the assembly while visitors were present. At the beginning one brother wanted to know if Jesus taught His disciples that works were required? ([Matt. 25](#)). He accused the preacher of ignoring him or brushing him off at the evening service. The preacher would not commit himself on this question other than to say he had many Scriptures on the board and had covered the point. He then added he handled it as best he could and made a play on the fact that he was alone in the pulpit and questions were coming at him from several in the audience. The brother again confronted him with the fact he did not get an answer, and the preacher said, "I know you didn't but I wasn't ignoring you or brushing you off."

The brother then tried to get on grounds that they were in agreement on. [Eph. 2:8-9](#) was read and the brother commented that they could agree when one obeyed and was baptized his salvation was by the grace of God, not of one's merits. The preacher agreed. The preacher was then asked, did he say that it was not necessary to have any works? He answered, "Did I say that?" Pressing the preacher further the brother asked if the preacher was preaching "faith only" and did he believe it as taught by Calvinists that one is justified by faith only and it is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort? The preacher said he believed we lay up good works in heaven, but that none of these good works have any efficacy toward the forgiveness of sin. Asked to state it again, these are the exact words of the preacher, "I believe that my faith in the blood of Christ forgives my sins, on the basis of that blood I believe there is not one work I can ever do anywhere that will ever have efficacy toward the forgiveness of any sin or toward the purifying of my soul through the forgiveness of sin." He was then asked, "Then you don't have to do any works?" The preacher then stated any man that was a man of faith would work because he was saved and that the new birth or new life is a certainty he is going to work. He stated there is no such thing as a living faith that does not work.

Writer's Comments

I agree in and of itself there is no efficacy toward the forgiveness of any sin by a single work, but neither is there efficacy in "faith alone" toward the forgiveness of sin. By efficacy I mean power. Compare the above discussion to the Methodist Articles of Religion in the Discipline of The Methodist Church, Article 10, page 29, 1956 Edition. "Of Good Works" – "Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit." Again, in The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches by Edward T. Hiscox, on Articles of Faith, Number 5, page 62, we read on "Justification" – "... That it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in Christ: by means of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us by God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity." Sounds familiar brethren, doesn't it? If not Calvinism, then what is it?

Baptist And Mormon Quibble On Baptism

Next question asked the preacher was this: If a man received faith and was killed before he was baptized would he go to heaven? The preacher answered, "I don't know, do you?" When given [Mark 16:16](#) to consider, the preacher said he did not believe anyone properly taught and having faith would refuse baptism, at least not in any quantities. He then proceeds to use the worn out Baptist and Mormon quibble. Suppose a man is in the pew and believes, the invitation is extended and he steps in the aisle to be baptized and drops dead of a heart attack, can we send him to hell? Then states judgment is up to the Son of God, and He did not have that purpose in mind in coming to earth, but rather His purpose was to save. Then goes into a lengthy discussion that there is an exception for every rule, and these vary with circumstances. He feels rule could be broken, but then turns and states baptism is where the blood of Christ is. Asked if a man should be baptized, he says he believes there is no salvation apart from baptism for the man who has every opportunity. A lengthy discussion follows this and the preacher being questioned states a man cannot be saved without baptism. He then uses the old Baptist argument on [Titus 3:5](#), but, as the Baptist, neglects to tie in [Titus 3:8, 14](#). He next refers to [Col. 2:12](#) and believes this to teach a man's faith causes him to be baptized, then he will arise in a new life of thankfulness and gratefulness and gratitude, a life in which certainly he will work. Concludes there is no gratitude unless that gratitude is demonstrated, and that there is no life of faith unless it is demonstrated. He again stresses the importance of the blood of Christ and that it is only the blood of Christ that washes away sins. The preacher then asked again for a show of hands of any that disagreed with him up to this point. A brother said he did not agree with him and asked him if at the last Lord's Day evening service when he was asked by another brother if he believed in "faith only," he answered the brother twice and said "Yes, I believe in 'faith only'." The preacher did not deny the statement or in any way try to refute the accusation. He later in the discussion came back to the question and said, "The Bible pictures salvation as a product of faith and faith alone," and that he believes salvation is the product of faith and "faith alone." Later the preacher was asked if he believed baptism was an outward sign of an inward grace and he answered in the affirmative. Confusing, isn't it? In this young man's lack of exegesis and common logic in this discussion, -it is extremely difficult after listening to him to know what he actually is saying and truly believes. Let us again turn to the Baptist Manual on Church Ordinances, page 20, Note 8, and see the similarity in the doctrine presented by the young preacher and by Edward Hiscox. "Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of 'baptismal regeneration': but it is essential to obedience since Christ has commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world and to membership in the church which is his body. And no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of obedience and tokens of affections." (Emp. mine. MLA). The statement "essential to a public confession of Christ before the world," is to say it is an outward sign of an inward grace. That "no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of obedience" is comparable with the young preacher's statement that gratitude is not gratitude unless demonstrated, and that there is no life of faith unless it is demonstrated. Also in the terms "if the opportunity" and "considering various circumstances" he is on the ground occupied in Fletcher's Situation Ethics. "Exceptions depending on various circumstances."

Faith Is A Work; [John 6:27-29](#)

The young preacher was twice asked if this passage did not teach that "faith" was a "work?" He ignored it the first time and then gave one of the most feeble illustrations I have ever heard. There was no logic to his reasoning whatsoever. Those who teach that men are not saved by any kind of works invariably back themselves into a close corner from which it is impossible to escape. While they state man is saved without any kind of work, they contend that man is saved by "faith only." Yet as one brother brought out concerning [John 6:27-29](#), the Bible emphatically teaches that faith is a "work." Note verse 29 where Jesus, in response to their question, says that, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Faith is a work of God. So when this young brother teaches man is saved by "faith only" without any kind of works, he denies his own affirmative by man being saved by that which he says man cannot be saved. For the fact remains Jno. 6:29 states that believe, the verb, of faith, the noun, is a work, and who will deny that a verb denotes action. Twist the passage any way you so desire, you cannot change this fundamental fact: faith is a work.

But let us hear the young man's answer to Jno. 6:27-29. He states if you place it in its context, that Jesus treats these people precisely as I might treat a young child that comes to the kitchen and says, "What can I do that I can do a work to help you?" And I say to him in response, "the work you can do is to get out of my way and go into the other room." He then goes further to explain his reasoning and says, "You are placing yourself in a position to respond or to answer the question of this child in the same words or phrase which he has spoken it." The interpretation of the passage is, so he says, because Paul places "faith" and "works" in complete opposite directions, one of the other. But gentle reader let me ask a question here: "What does the Bible teach?" That man is saved by God's grace with man appropriating that grace by his faith in working or obeying what the grace of God teaches him to do.

Justified By Faith Without Works

As all who lean toward Calvinism or "faith only," our young friend now runs to the golden book of the Bible, according to their reasoning (Romans), especially chapter four, verses 2-5, and states that according to verse 3, Abraham was justified when he believed, and that he was not justified by works. Here he makes the mistake made by many today that are proponents of this view. He fails to understand the context of Romans four and that it is dealing with the works of the law of Moses and that there are also in the Bible works of God, and works of man. Now the passage used in [Rom. 4:3](#) is in reference to [Gen. 15:6](#), where Abraham is promised a son. He fails to recognize Abraham manifested in faith in [Genesis 12](#), when he left the Ur of Chaldees as mentioned in [Heb. 11:8-10](#). Also, if Abraham was an alien sinner at this time of [Gen. 15](#), it seems peculiar that in verse 1 of [Gen. 15](#), God said to Abraham, "... I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Strange words to an alien, isn't it? Back to [Heb. 11](#), we see everyone's faith mentioned there is related to his actions on God's obedience, that is works. The young preacher attempted to evade the issue, saying it (Romans) could not be talking of the law of Moses because Abraham lived and died before the Law was given at Sinai. But any honest Bible student that can see through a window will admit the Roman letter is dealing with the law of Moses versus the law of Christ which is by faith.

The fourth chapter of Romans has always been a popular text of those who argue "faith only." In this chapter Paul is discussing Abraham and the justification of this patriarch of God ages before the law of the Jews was given to them. He is proving that Abraham

was not justified by works but rather by faith in God. If you will read this chapter carefully, you will find there that Paul has in mind the works of the law of Moses – the deeds of the law of the Jewish nation. [Rom. 3:20](#) says, “For by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” The law of Moses is clearly the law Paul has in mind. Paul says that Abraham was not saved by the old law. He died centuries before that law was given. So the fourth chapter of Romans does not give any encouragement or comfort to those who propagate the false Calvinistic doctrine of “salvation by faith only,” then or now. Commentary on Romans by R. L. Whiteside, page 96, states, “Reference to Abraham is used to show salvation is by working faith that was demonstrated by Abraham.” It is strange that these super-exegetes do not see that if works of faith destroy grace, then the works which they say a Christian must perform to be justified destroys all grace from the life of a Christian. They need to tell us how, according to their judgment, there can be any grace in the justification of a Christian by works.

[James 2:17-26](#)

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” ([Jas. 2:17](#)). If “faith alone” is the means of justification, what about the following, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know O vain man, that faith without works is dead” ([Jas. 2:19-20](#)). “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect” ([Jas. 2:22](#)). It is easy to see in this historic incident, that Abraham’s faith wrought (exercises itself) with his works in offering up his son, Isaac. “Wrought with,” is from *sunergei*, imperfect active of *sunergeo*, to cooperate with; hence, faith and works kept on cooperating with each other to produce the result of Abraham’s justification. In the statement, “and by works was faith made perfect;” it was “by” (Greek, *ek*, out of) works that faith in Abraham’s case, was “made perfect.” The phrase, “made perfect,” is from *eteleiothe*, aorist passive indicative of *teleio*, to consummate, to complete, to finish. The tenses in this verse are highly significant. Faith was continually exercising itself (imperfect tense) with works (the command to offer up Isaac on the altar), and out of these works faith was perfected at once (aorist tense). Neither works, nor faith operating alone can justify; each in cooperation with the other produces that status wherein God justifies. (Gospel Advocate Commentary on [James 2:22](#), pages 144-145). Faith and works are component parts that, put together, constitute the whole. Neither of itself and alone has the efficacy toward the forgiveness of sins. Next, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” ([Jas. 2:24](#)). “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” ([Jas. 2:26](#)). Faith that saves is the faith we read of in Galatians, “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” ([Gal. 5:6](#)).

Concluding Remarks

If this is not Calvinistic teaching, please tell me what it is. One minute it sounds like brethren are straight, the next they turn completely in the opposite direction. This I am told led to a dividing of this small group, and thus it is a serious problem. All arguments used in this discussion were the time-worn ones of those who have advocated “faith only” in the past. Perhaps my conclusions are not fair to this young preacher. I am unaware of the internal problems that may have existed in the congregation prior to the lesson being taught on “faith only” and the discussion we have mentioned. It may well be that extenuating circumstances caused those who left with this young preacher and

the one who regularly preached there, who held the same positions, to consider starting another congregation to be the lesser of two evils. However, I can say without fear of contradiction that this “faith only” brought to a head the differences that existed and split the church. At any rate, if the young preacher will tell the true facts, and if I am wrong, I will make public apology and ask for forgiveness in the pages of this publication. If, on the other hand, my analysis is correct, I plead with those of this persuasion to use their ability to help extend the borders of the kingdom rather than cause division and hard feelings one toward another. I was young once and was mixed up on passages, but I never pressed these to the point of division in the church. Much can be accredited to your youth, but when you know you are in the wrong and continue to tread this path, “brethren you are without excuse.” Man is a free moral agent and capable of making his decisions to obey or disobey God, but man, as a free moral agent, does not have the right to legislate where God has not legislated.

I am not trying to be mean, nasty, egotistical or abusive, but I do believe we are entitled to ask men of this nature to tell us plainly, if this is not what you believe, then “What Do you believe?” If brethren do not believe the error that is here mentioned, “How can you tolerate it?” Do you not see that you are compromising truth and righteousness?

In conclusion, let me state this young preacher has a tremendous amount of talent, and is very zealous and ready to sacrifice for that which he believes to be true. I have known him for several years, and even after the discussion held in my home, mentioned at the beginning of this article, he was in my home again during this meeting we were having, but the opportunity never arose to talk further on our differences, nor was I aware how far off he was on basic issues. I was told that he was, but I did not want to accept it on the testimony of others as this would be hearsay. Now with the tape on this, I do not believe it to be hearsay, but it is from his own testimony.

Brethren, it is later than you think, and the problems we are discussing are a lot more serious than some brethren would lead us to believe them to be. Who are the most .susceptible to this false teaching? The young and weak in the church, and we cannot tolerate this sort of teaching, or those who teach it, without serious consequences resulting.

Brethren With Arms Elbow Deep in Calvinism (III):

Justification

In my previous articles I have discussed “Grace and Law” and “Faith Versus Works.” Now I shall show, in this last article, how the things mentioned serve to bring God and man together, showing the part each has in man’s “justification.” The teaching of some brethren on this worries me in many ways. For instance: (1) “. . . that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in Christ; by means of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us by God . . .” (The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, by Edward T. Hiscox on “Justification,” page 62.) This is pure Baptist Doctrine. It is wrong to assume that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to man without effort on man’s part. (2) Men do not realize the danger in getting off on these tangents, for when they decide they are wrong and will admit it, some of their converts that are more militant and radical will not change. There is also the danger when the champion of a cause defects and admits he was wrong that those who had faith in him may become disillusioned and quit altogether. Brethren, I plead with you to return ‘to the Scriptures before the damage is irreparable.

“Justification” is defined by Webster as: “Act of justifying or state of being justified: vindication; A being accepted by or made acceptable to God, as righteous or worthy of salvation.” In Vine’s Expository Dictionary of N.T Words we read the following: “Justification,” “a noun from Gr. dikaiosin, denoting the act of pronouncing righteous, justification, acquittal: it’s precise meaning is determined by the verb dikaoon (justify) meaning primarily, to deem to be right, signifies in the N.T. (B) To be righteous, to pronounce righteous.” (pages 284, 285, Vol. 2) Many make the mistake of making “justification” synonymous with eternal life. However, eternal life is a result of “justification” rather than being a part of it. Hear Paul on the matter, “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7). The only way we have eternal life is in promise. (cf. Mark 10:29-30, “. . . he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time;” “. . . and in the world to come eternal life.”)

I believe all can agree that we are “justified by Christ” which is the same as to say we are “justified in Christ.” Paul affirms, “there is therefore now no condemnation in Christ Jesus . . .” “. . . the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:12). It is utterly impossible to separate Jesus from “justification.” Yet many today take one part of “justification,” build a fence around it, and ignore other passages. It is my purpose to pay due respect to all essentials active in our “justification.”

Four Essentials Of Justification

1. Grace: Rom. 3:21-24. In the context we see that “justification” is apart from the law of Moses or ourselves. Note especially verse 24, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Also, “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph. 2:5).

2. Blood: Rom. 5:9-10. Notice the contrast in verse 9 of “now” and “shall be.” . . . being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” From this we again see that “justification” is one thing and salvation from wrath, or eternal life, is another. We also read, “. . . we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son . . .” (vs. 10). His blood required His death.

3. Faith: Rom. 4:18-25. Of this faith Paul said, “. . . if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Verses 24, 25). In Rom. 5:1 we read, “Therefore being justified by faith . . .” Likewise in Gal. 3:26, “For ye are all the children (K.J.), sons (A.S.) of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

4. Works: Jas. 2:24, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Jas. 2:21-23 tells of Abraham being justified by works, and verse 25, of Rahab.

The question now arises, “Are there four different ways of obtaining ‘justification,’ or are the four essentials mentioned above a part of the whole?”

Analysis

On “justification” by grace we read the following, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12). From this we learn that grace brings us righteous instruction from God on how to obtain salvation. From Rom. 1:16-17 we find from Paul that in the gospel are the instructions given by the grace of God. Leaving the elders of Ephesus, Paul said, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God and the word of his grace . . .” (Acts 20:32). God’s grace has given us through His favor and love, all that is, “. . . profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished (adequate, equipped) unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The parenthesis is taken from NASB. Peter proclaimed,

. . . His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . .” (2 Pet. 1:3).

Grace is the divine part given by God.

On “justification” by blood Paul wrote, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past . . .” “. . . that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24-26). Christ by His blood made a propitiation (from the Gr. hilasterion, a noun, meaning appeasement, that which satisfies the demands of justice – Vines, page 224, Vol. 3). The phrase “by His blood” is to be taken in immediate connection with “propitiation.” In that the blood was shed for us freely after His death we shall again see

that the blood used in our “justification” is by the divine power, not human. It is interesting to notice here that in Rom. 3:24-25, grace, blood and faith are all mentioned.

On “justification” by faith the Hebrew writer tells us, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). Heb. 11 is recognized by all Bible students to be the chapter on faith. Paul joined grace and faith together when he penned, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not by works lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). We shall deal with works shortly, so let us at this time keep our attention on grace and faith by again hearing Paul, “By whom also we have access by faith into his grace . . .” (Rom. 5:2). “Access” is from the Gr. *prosagoge*, Lit., a leading or bringing into the presence of (*pros*-to, *ago*-to lead), denotes access, with which is associated the thought of freedom to enter through the assistance or favor of another. (Vines, page 21, Vol. 1). In our passage the door (access) is faith to get into the grace of God. Faith is an act of the human toward “justification.” Paul said, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

On “justification,” we now turn to that which is least accepted by men and give our thoughts to works. From my previous articles, we have shown that in the Bible there are different kinds of works. The works of man that he might think would earn his salvation, and the works of God to which through our obedience we can have salvation. There is at this time much controversy among sectarians and some brethren over works, but the works I am speaking of in this article involves a doing of all that God commands. The confusion arises through their effort to pit the works mentioned by Paul and the works mentioned by James. The passages being Rom. 4:3-5 and Jas. 2:21-23. It is a strange thing that those who advocate from the passage in Romans ‘that Abraham was “justified by faith” and not works (while James states the kind of works that save and couples them with faith) do not read a little further in Rom. 4:12 and see how one can be “justified” like Abraham. Paul affirms in this passage that one must walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham. What were these steps? They are mentioned in Gen. 12, 15, 17, 22, the last thing he did being the offering of his son. God then and never before then, called him His friend. James said the same in Jas. 2:21-23, that Abraham was “justified” when he offered Isaac on the altar, the last thing he was commanded to do, and that it was by works. So we likewise are “justified” by the same faith as Abraham when we have done the last thing we are commanded to do to obtain pardon. Then and only then shall we be saved by God, that is, as God’s works are manifested in our lives by our obedience to His commands. Works are important and, like faith, make up the human part of “justification.”

Conclusion

Which of these four essentials can we set apart and refuse to accept and be “justified” by God? Picture man, if you will, as being separated from God by sins and iniquities. (Isa. 59:1-2). “How can man be reconciled with and justified by God?” The answer is simple. On God’s part, grace and blood; on man’s part, faith and- works. It is an intriguing, fascinating thing to see God and man working together to bring about “justification” by

grace through faith. One act of man in bringing him in contact with the blood of Christ is baptism. “. . . that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death” (Rom. 6:3). Rom. 6:4-5 carries the same thought. Why is baptism into His death of importance? This is where the blood is contacted, for it was after death that the blood of Christ was shed, “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19:33-34). If the blood is not contacted in baptism, “How do we contact it?” We have noticed also in this article faith and works complementing each other. In Jas. 2:17-26 it is stated time and again. The reader might like to mull over another thought as we close: works are always plural, not singular, establishing the truth that man does more than the work, singular, of faith of John 6:28-29.

If we are not “justified,” it is not God’s fault. He supplied grace and the blood; therefore, the fault would lie in man’s not accepting his responsibility to manifest in his life faith and works. Without faith and works, the grace of God and the blood of Christ have been in vain