

Experiential Religion-Part One

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Calvinism is an Experiential Religion. In short it is warmed over Existentialism. Existentialism is a philosophy of the world which has as its bottom line: “It is true only if it has been experienced..” It is a “spinoff” of the philosophy “Idealism,” the philosophy which says that matter does not exist; everything which exists is only that which exists in thought, or mind. This is the philosophy which shapes Christian Science which declares that sin does not actually, literally exist, except in the mind. Sickness and evil exist only in the mind. If you do not think it, it is not true for you. Existentialism places a little different twist on it and says that in religion, unless it has been experienced, it is not true. Neo-Orthodoxy is based upon Existentialism. Neo-Orthodoxy is the religious foundation which says: “We do not have the written word of God; we never had the written word of God, and we never shall have the written word of God. However, when we believe that the Bible is the written word of God, then in our heart it becomes the written word of God.” This is essentially what the theory of declares when it teaches that a matter is true when one has experienced it, and until and unless it is experienced by one, then to that one it is never true. The Calvinist refuses to carry this to the full logical end and teach that God does not exist until God is experienced. But they teach this regarding salvation. They teach that one does not have salvation until one experiences it in the heart; thus a term better felt than told arose with Calvinism.

Necessity of Experiential Religion To Calvinism

Experiential religion is necessary to validate the TULIP doctrines of Unconditional Salvation, Limited Atonement, and Irresistible Grace. The “conservative” Calvinist, as some are wont to refer to themselves, freely boasts that Experiential Religion is the only true religion; the only biblical religion; the only religion which does not dishonor Christ and his sacrifice on the cross. Note first of all, that it is used to defend the theory of Unconditional Salvation.

If there is no condition attached to salvation, then how is one to know if they are saved or lost? The Calvinist replies: “One knows when and if they are saved because they feel it in their heart. They have had an experience and that experience is sufficient to prove that they are saved without meeting a single condition. The first question we ask is, “By what standard does one interpret their experience to know that it is God telling them that they are saved?” In more than sixty years as a Christian, I have never been given an answer to this question. When one is put to the test in that way they more often than not become belligerent and bring the discussion to an end quickly. Most have replied, “Well I know it is true because I feel it is.” But they have never answered my question about the standard of interpretation. The answer is simple if they would answer it truthfully and intelligently. The answer would be: “My feelings are the standard by which I interpret it.” This brings us to raw subjectivism. I feel /experience it, therefore it is true. They have argued in my presence that you can not use logic because that would make our understanding the result of our wisdom, and not of the wisdom of God. Yet they will use logic to defend not using logic.

The pure Calvinist will argue that there is not a single condition attached to salvation by God. They argue that the Bible does not teach conditions. They argue that conditions are man made, and are not of God. They argue that salvation occurs in the individual’s future before that one is born, and that the election and damnation process does not depend upon any good, or any

evil that one has done; that the process is in the mind of God and imputed to that one before birth. Of course all of this in both theories is “validated” by experiences on the part of those who are saved.

This Experiential Theory Contradicts the Bible

1. The Bible plainly teaches that obedience to the will of God is demanded by God of any person who will be saved. Jesus plainly said in Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” We read in Hebrews 5:8-9, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience through the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

2. The Bible plainly teaches that one must be crucified with Christ in order to live with Christ. In Romans 6:1-7 Paul teaches this fact. The Holy Spirit is refuting error in this passage which would later be taught by ungodly men. That kind of person perverts the scriptures to suit their own purposes. Paul had said in Romans 5:20 that where sin abounded that grace did much more abound. God knew that evil men would twist that to try to make it appear that Paul was saying that the more we sin the more grace abounds in our life, therefore we all ought to sin more that grace might abound more. Many have taught that precise thing in modern times. Romans chapter six is God’s answer. **Verse one:** Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? In scriptures death is a separation. Keep this in mind. **Verse two:** If one is separated from sin how can he at the same time continue to live in it? Impossible. In **verse three** Paul declares that a fact is common knowledge. Everybody knows this. Knows what Paul? That so many as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death. Baptized into Christ equals to being baptized into his death. Why? Because the one baptized must fully understand and be convinced that he is putting that old man of sin on the cross with Christ in a figure of

speech in order to crucify with Christ the old will to sin. If this deliberation is not present then one is not baptized into Christ. As Jesus died by crucifixion, then the old man of sin must die that same death. Verse four: Therefore! This word introduces a conclusion. A conclusion is based upon premises. The conclusion is that one who is baptized into Christ is one who is baptized into death. Death is a state or condition of separation from the subject of the separation. Christians are those who are separated from sin. When we put the old man to death by crucifixion with Christ, then we are baptized with Jesus into death to sin. Then, like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should live (walk) in newness of life. Verse five: For is from a little Greek word which introduces an elaboration or further explanation. If we have been planted together (united, joined, married) with Christ in the likeness of his death (crucifixion), we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Verse six: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. The old man of sin served sin. That old man had to be put to death in a like death with Christ; crucifixion. Why? So that henceforth we should not serve sin. Christ was hanged on the cross in a figure to die to sin. So we died with him in order that we should not serve sin again. Calvinism can not teach this, and many other clear passages of Scripture. Their doctrine says it doesn't matter how much nor what kind of sin the saint commits it can not be imputed to him to make him accountable for committing it.

3. The Bible plainly teaches that faith is essential to salvation, Mark 16:16. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Shall be" is future tense. Future tense from what? Future tense from believing and being baptized. From what? (1) believing. (2) Being baptized. How far into the future? That is irrelevant. It matters not whether it is a nano second, or a month. God makes it plain that both belief and baptism are essential to

forgiveness of past sins, but he makes it just as plain that it is neither act alone which saves. Both are a part of God's will for man in order that man can be saved. Believing is a work which man must do, John 6:27-29.

4. The Bible plainly teaches that submission to the will of God is the first step in obtaining salvation. In Romans 6:16 Paul declared : "Know ye not (equivalent to our, 'Why this is common knowledge. '), that to whom ye yield yourselves servants (bond-slaves) to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" It is common knowledge that no person can serve as slave to two masters at the same time, Matthew 6:24. It is also common knowledge that to whom we submit/yield ourselves to that one we are bond slaves. This yielding is the first step in obedience to whomever we yield to obey. We yield to God; to God's righteousness in becoming a child of God and having our sins forgiven. Cf verses 17-18.

5. The Bible plainly teaches that repentance is essential to be saved, Acts 17:30-31. Repentance is an act of the mind; a turning process of the will. It is an act which must be done by the subject of the verb repent. God commands all to repent! It is not as the Calvinist claims, a gift from God. Rather the commandment of God is to the individual to repent, or turn in his mind.

6. The Bible plainly teaches that confession with the mouth is essential to salvation, Romans 10:9-10.

7. The Bible clearly teaches that baptism into the death of Jesus is necessary for one to be united with Christ and thereby saved from all past sins, Romans 6_3-6, Galatians 3:27.

8. Yes, the Bible teaches salvation by the grace of God; but through the faith of Jesus, the gospel system of faith, Ephesians 2:8. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved

through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Paul affirms in this passage that grace is the only cause, or grounds, for God to offer salvation. The word through means in one side and out the other without impediment, or detour. So the medium through which grace flows in salvation is the faith system of the gospel of Christ. Many object by claiming that faith in this passage means personal faith. This simply cannot be grammatically true. Why. Through in this passage is used as a preposition. There is a simple rule of English grammar which states that through, following a passive verb is always used as a preposition (Oxford English Dictionary, 20 Vol. Set.). Saved is in the Greek passive. Therefore *through* following it must be a preposition. A simple rule of the Koine Greek declares that when a preposition precedes and is joined with a noun that the definite article “the” must be understood as being present even though it usually is not written in the text by the writer. It is not usually written because the rule is that it is to be understood as being present. Now, with these grammatical facts, let us look at the impact the passage makes. Paul taught that we are saved because of the grace of God through the gospel system of faith. In other words, as we submit in obedience to the word, God’s grace operates on us in saving us from our sins. This fully agrees with Paul’s teaching in Romans 6:16-23. There he teaches that when we submit in obedience to the gospel, it is precisely at the point of that obedience from the heart that God saves us, making us a bond slave to righteousness, and this is by grace, Romans 6:23. We have both God and man acting together in order that God’s grace (gift) may be made. It matters not how much man may do, salvation is still a gift of God and his grace is the cause of that gift; not man’s righteousness, or merit.

9. Children of God are those whose disposition/mind-set/spirit testifies that they are the children of God, Romans 8:16-17. But this disposition must have actions to testify correctly. This passage involves, **not** the Holy Spirit, but that disposition all Christians

must possess; the mind-set of Christ in them, Philippians 2:5-8. This is the disposition which says to the Father, “My will is to do thy will always under all circumstances, regardless of the cost.” (Matthew 16:24; John 4:34; John 6:38; James 4:15.) That will is reflected in the conduct of life. Therefore when that spirit/disposition testifies, it does so based upon the activities of life and it is convincing because it is true. Without this disposition, everything becomes subjective. With this disposition in the inner man, the inner man/heart, always desires to do the right thing, and is morally compelled to act accordingly. There may be inadvertent sins, and sins of ignorance, and sometimes even sins of ignorance when we allow that disposition to weaken and falter within. But with that disposition present, even in a weakened state, it will compel one to make things right with God and those whom they may have wronged. Therefore it testifies the truth.

Conclusion

The individual who is the subject of the verb is the one who must act in harmony with the will of God in obeying the commandments God gives to the sinner in order for the sinner to be forgiven of his past sins by God. Time does not permit more than a summary of this last argument, but it is one which is unanswerable. Greek Grammar rules determine the arrangement and ultimately the meaning of the Greek words in a particular context. The grammatical meaning is that meaning which God holds all men accountable to and for. In the Greek language, every responsibility of man connected to and upon which the acceptance of the gifts of God rest verbs are found either in the present indicative active tense, the imperative mood, or the middle voice, or in two or more of these. What this means is that the subject of the verb has the sole responsibility to perform the activity of the verb in order that the blessings associated with the doing of that verb come back in some way to rest upon the subject.

This, my friends, is absolutely conclusive. We have never heard a valid attempt of an answer to this assertion. In a small book by this author, *The Greek Grammar and the Influence Of the Holy Spirit*, that fact is proved. I have never heard of any attempt to seriously answer the thesis of the book stated in the last paragraph. The book is available in electronic form at www.booksaready.com for all who wish to check it out.

We shall continue in Part Two.