

Experiential Religion-Part Two

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(**Note:** This is the second article on Experiential Religion as it appeared in the last issue of the Gospel Standard, Oct./Dec., 2012.)

We noted in Part One of this article that the theory of Limited Atonement depends primarily upon experiential religion. Because the theory contradicts so many plain passages of Scripture, they have to depend upon subjectivism/feelings/experiences in order to convince so many of its supposed validity. In this article we shall expose the anti-scriptural position demanded by acceptance of the theory. Because we have exposed the error of Experiential Religion as such, we shall in this part deal primarily with the scriptures and Limited Atonement. We need to emphasize here that when one doctrine of Calvinism falls, that exposes the fatal weakness of all their other doctrines which flow out of an attempt to uphold their TULIP.

Limited Atonement

Properly defined, this doctrine says that Christ died only for the eternally elected to be saved ones, and for no one else. Those eternally elected to damnation have no hope and no salvation possible for them. They are born, live, and die eternally damned by God. Little babies who, according to this theory, are born in this condition, die in this condition. This condition according to Calvinism has nothing to do with any thing either good or bad which the individual has done, or can do. It is solely according to a decision made by God in eternity before man was created. Calvinism claims God made the decision, but that God is not accountable for their eternally lost condition. It is not within the scope of this article to go further into that doctrine, but mention is made because the theory of Limited Atonement needs that doctrine

for its own existence. Whether it is called Particular Redemption, or Limited Atonement does not change the teaching one bit.

Calvinists believe, they say (Bremmer), that the atonement of Christ is sufficient, but efficacious for only those whom the Father elected to save. Calvinists and most people confuse the sacrifice at Calvary and the Atonement made when that blood is applied. The two are separate. It matters not insofar as Calvinists are concerned in the Limited Atonement. They claim the sacrifice is sufficient to save all, but it is powerful only to save the elect. That is double talk in order to try to evade the fact that Scripture plainly teaches that the blood of Jesus was shed for all men, that all men might receive the atonement God offered to all. The bottom line with the Calvinist is that all who fail to experience salvation are those who are not elected to be saved eternally, but those who were elected to eternal damnation. That is flawed reasoning which depends upon the testimony of men and not the testimony of God. Their reasoning that the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient but not efficacious enough (not powerful enough) to save all is flawed logic and grammar. It can not be sufficient to save unless it is powerful enough to save. I am not sufficient enough to do a task unless I have the strength (power) to do that task.

Calvinists confuse the sacrifice on the cross for all men, with the atonement effected only when the blood of that sacrifice is applied to the sinner. The Calvinists use a flawed argument that intent is determined by extent. That may be true with man offering gifts, but God offers the same gifts to all his moral creatures. (Matthew 5:45.) Calvinists must either ignore this truth, or deny this truth in order to remain Calvinist. In Calvinism the (1) Substitutionary death of Christ, (2) The Propitiation, (3) The Redemption, and (4) The Reconciliation are all included in the Atonement. Keep in mind now that they confuse the Atonement with the Sacrifice. At the Atonement, it is true that three of the others are completed. The fourth, the substitutionary death does not, nor ever did exist.

This theory has already been answered in an earlier article. We need to examine this gross error of confusing the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross for all men, and the atonement made when the blood of that sacrifice is applied. We would like to think that it may have begun as a sincere mistake, but we question that it would be sincerely promoted and defended by sincere thinking men.

Remember the Atonement Day sacrifice was first slain. Then the blood of that sacrifice was offered, first for the priest with the blood of the bullock slain for Aaron and his house. The goat sacrifice was made and then its blood was applied in the most holy place for the people. (Read Leviticus chapter sixteen for fuller details of the Atonement Day sacrifices and the actual atonement with the blood.) It was not until the blood was itself applied in the way prescribed by God that the Atonement Sacrifice was actually a reconciliation/atonement effected. Because Christ is the antitype of that sacrifice, then we have to assume the same with his blood. When we look at it in this way, the Calvinist argument that the atonement of Christ is sufficient, but not efficacious becomes non-sensical. All we have to do is simply look at the Scriptures in an honest to goodness common sense way and the whole system falls apart. All the system rests upon four major points. We have demolished one, and just about have the second one finished. Brother Elliott has taken care of the third one and the fourth is so irrational and non-sensical that a little shove and it can not stand alone. Let us look now at some simple and very obvious facts set forth in holy Scripture.

1. That some are saved and some are lost is an irrefutable fact of Scripture. Just a few references shall be made at this point. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; 2:3-12; Matthew 25:24-46; John 8:24; Romans 1:20-32. These are but a few of the many, many passages which could be referenced, but only one is sufficient to show the truthfulness of the proposition.

2. In every instance of salvation, those who were saved had some action to be performed by them before they were saved. Those actions vary according to the situation, circumstances, and position in their journey of life. One might be a believing, penitent sinner and need only to confess with his mouth and be baptized into Christ. Or one may be an unbeliever and need to do several things. But one thing above all other things is absolutely certain: the one whom God saves must have an honest heart in order to believe. In another perspective, one must submit in the heart to the will of God before salvation. These two things depends upon the sinner to be done. No one else, not even the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit can do them for the sinner. We have already referred to the book, *The Greek Grammar and the Direct Influence Of the Holy Spirit*. The rules of Greek Grammar prove beyond any question that when a verb is in either: (1) the Middle Voice, (2) The Imperative Mood, or (2) The present Active Indicative tense, that the subject of the verb is identified as the one who must perform the action of that verb in order for any blessing associated with the action to return upon the subject. In every instance of matters pertaining to eternal life, where there is action associated with the reception of the gift, then it is found in some instance to be in either one or more of the three mentioned. It is conclusive then, that our gift of eternal life depends upon the testimony of God and not the testimony of men. We could rest our case, but we shall look at some other things.

3. The fact that some shall be lost and some shall be saved makes the final outcome dependent upon a choice made by the sinner. Dependent upon that choice one will either submit to righteousness, or submit to sin, Romans 6:16. It is a choice which every individual in life makes upon reaching an age wherein that one is accountable to God. If that is not the case then either: (1) God is a respecter of persons, or else God is not the Ultimate Cause of the universe, or in simple language; God is not Sovereign over all. Which is the case? The Calvinist says neither, that God

made a choice, and that choice rules all, even God. That is double talk. It is irrational. Some would say, we know that it is unbelievable because it is irrational, but it is true. That is the number one choice of most leaders when trapped in their inconsistencies and contradictions.

4. The Scripture clearly sets forth the fact that Jesus died for all men, Hebrews 2:9. “But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste (experience) death for every man.” Acts 2:21: “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” The commission (commandment) given the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16) does not read, “Go preach the gospel to the saved.” That is what a Primitive Baptist preacher named Bradley said many years ago as he came on the air on Sunday nights over some clear channel radio stations. He made it clear that he believed that the gospel was addressed only to the ones whom God had elected to be saved, and that they were saved already but needed to know it. That is not what Paul said in Romans 1:16.

5. Mr. Bradley had it consistent when he said he preached the gospel only to the saved. If, because of the shedding of the blood of Jesus, sins could never be imputed to the saved, and the saved were saved before they are born, then the saved are never sinners. Only those are sinners to whom God imputes sins. And since all sins are acts either in the mind or body, or both in mind and body, then the saved never commit an act of sin. **Question:** Have you ever known a person competent to be held accountable for their actions as an adult who never sinned? One who never committed an act or thought which God condemns in His word?

6. All the confusion created by Calvinism about the supposed Limited Atonement can be cleared up by an understanding of the

atonement process. In the Old Testament there were certain things the Israelites must not do, and certain things which they must do. Disobedience meant death. So with the Atonement made possible by the death of Jesus. The sacrifice of Jesus was not the Atonement. *The application of the blood of Jesus is the Atonement.* Jesus is the antitype of the Old Testament Atonement. Read Leviticus chapter sixteen, and all the other scriptures regarding the Atonement, and it becomes clear that Calvinist double talk on atonement is deceptive and misleading so much so that an understanding of the atonement and its function in Scripture becomes hopeless.

7. Without the doctrine of unconditional election; the doctrine of limited atonement and the doctrine of irresistible grace (which stands or falls with each of the other doctrines. This is true of all the TULIP; it all stands together or falls together because they were created by man, dependent upon each other. All depend upon a misunderstanding of Atonement as being the sacrifice of Christ, and not the application of his blood of his sacrifice. Four things are absolutely necessary to create enough doubt and questions in the minds of people to lead them to believe the doctrines. (1) Misunderstanding of the Sovereignty of God. (2) The Substitutionary death of Jesus. (3) Experiential religion, and (4) The worldly philosophy of Idealism out of which grows their teaching of the validity of irrationality and experiential religion, thus making essential human testimony superior to the written word of God. That will be next in a short article.

Conclusion

By this point, if one has not come to realize that Calvinism is spun out of inconsistent and irrational concepts of things which can not be true in the light in which the whole system presents them, then this little volume shall be as they call the sacrifice of Jesus, not efficacious enough to accomplish it. The fact is that Calvinism, though intended by John Calvin to be totally self-sufficient, is self-destructive. It is when you look at the actual foundation of the

TULIP, and see that these five doctrines support all the other teaching, but they have no actual foundation themselves, that the irrationality of Calvinism becomes apparent. Calvinism is presented in such a manner so as to appeal to the worldly mind-set. The spiritual mind-set is inquisitive. It is not satisfied with the testimony of man and it searches the scriptures daily as befits noble beings, Acts 17:11. Subjected to all the teaching of Scriptures, Calvinism is totally unacceptable to the believing mind which rests upon divine revelation, Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 4:3. We invite you to read the next article dealing with the philosophy of Idealism which necessarily influences the tenets of Calvinism, and subsequently rubs off on all who believe those tenets.