



Diakrisis (Australia)

'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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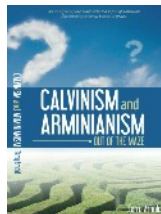
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Contents

- P.2,3** Editor's Comment
- P.4** The Ecumenical Movement Continues; The History of Same-Sex Marriage
- P.5** - What's Next? Trans-Gender Ministers; What the Pope Teaches
- P.6-8** What About Those Who Have Never Heard?
- P.9-13** The Art of Misquoting (Part 2)
- P.14-20** Your Comments & Questions

****New Book****



'Calvinism & Arminianism - Out of the Maze' by Terry Arnold. An analysis of the hotly debated topic of salvation and grace. What is biblical? What about predestination and election? What is 'fair'? This subject is laid bare with easy to read biblical expositions, refutations and answers to all the questions and arguments.
(239 pages) \$19.50 postage free

Editor's Comment

Recently I preached a sermon '*Bring the Gospel Back!*'. It came after a series of sermons over the last few years expressing my concern that we not only need to go back to the Gospel as our church foundation, but *we need to re-teach what exactly is the Gospel!* *

One only has to look at church billboards to see that there is little evidence of the Gospel being the foundation of many churches. Some messages are actually so works and morality based that they run counter to the biblical message of '*not of works*' and '*by grace*' alone (Eph.2:9; Rom.11:6). So many of these billboard signs feature innocuous sayings that look more like they came out of the Buddhist Book of Wisdom than any Christian tradition. Some I have seen recently read: '*Give acts of kindness, they keep returning to you*' or '*If God had a refrigerator your picture would be on it*'. Some signs are so desperate to catch people that they become crude: '*adult fun*' and '*Sunday night - sex*' (AOG churches). Why are we so '*ashamed of the Gospel*'? (Rom.1:16) Why not just put scripture on billboards that it might at least lead to the Gospel? Try this: '*For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*' (2Cor.5:21).

The Gospel is not about us, except that we are sinners under the wrath of God (Jn.3:36; Rom.5:9; 1Thess.1:10). The Gospel is not about health, prosperity or success, yet that is what *Hillsong* and many Charismatic/Pentecostal and ecumenical churches teach today. The Gospel is not us doing anything, because we cannot do anything to be saved since we were '*dead in sins*' (Rom.8:7; Jn.6:44,65; Eph.2:1). The Gospel is not us choosing, deciding for Jesus as saviour, or giving anything to God - for we have nothing to offer (Eph.2:8). If we did have something that could be offered then why did we need Jesus to die a horrible sacrificial death on our behalf? The Gospel is God accepting Jesus as the perfect once for all offering in our stead. The Gospel is not about the Holy Spirit or God's work *in* us (Sanctification), but rather God's work *for* us (Justification) - in the death of Jesus. It is not about a present work or Christ being crucified again (as in Catholicism), but a done work of Christ on one day about 2,000 years ago. The Gospel is not a 'seeker friendly' or 'user friendly' invitation. Man cannot make terms with God. The purpose of the Gospel is not primarily to solve felt needs, but to solve the problem of sin. The Gospel is not culturally relevant for no culture recognises it because no culture recognises mans sinfulness.

The apostle Paul had the same concern with the Galatians who had wandered off the Gospel of grace plus nothing - to one that added works of various kinds. His audience were professing Christians. But they had come to rely on other things added to the Gospel to *demonstrate* Christianity. Today such things as obedience, success in our Christian walk, performance or gifting, are relied upon

to please God and demonstrate the Gospel. But these have no part in the Gospel, although some of these things may be fruit of the Gospel. We too often confuse what is *necessary* to be justified, with what is the *fruit* in sanctification. The Gospel is about the former, not the latter. This Gospel is radically different to any other religious message. Yet today *we are making the Gospel sound more and more like other religions!* Many Christians I meet today actually do not understand what the Gospel is without adding some humanistic ideas to it.

How can we teach the depths of doctrine if there is a lack of understanding of the Gospel? Like Israel, the modern church is backslidden from the Gospel. ***‘Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts’*** (Is.28:9). What would the Lord say to today's post-modern church? Perhaps the message would be the same as was spoken to the backslidden Hebrew Christians: ***‘...you are dull of hearing...you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that uses milk is unskillfull in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil’*** (Heb.5:11-16). The ***‘dull of hearing’*** here refers to a slothfulness. The ***‘first principles of the oracles of God’*** are the basic doctrinal elements - *such as the Gospel*. If this foundational material is not assimilated, then ***‘strong meat’*** is simply inedible.

‘Christians’ need the Gospel today as much as unsaved people! We pastors and elders sometimes assume that Christians already know the Gospel and don’t need teaching on it? I would venture to say that all our problems in church today come from a lack of understanding and living out the Gospel. The foundations have been eroded. The Gospel must not just be a ‘programme’ we adopt to be more palatable to the unsaved.

I urge pastors and elders to teach the Gospel again. The many elements of the Gospel (substitution, redemption, propitiation, etc) are in themselves bottomless doctrines that can never be exhausted this side of eternity! They can be preached expositionally or topically and they will touch the very heart of God’s will! I urge Christians to delve into the depths of Gospel truths and thereby be armed with truths that will counter any false teaching. An added bonus of this ‘study’ is an increased discernment in all spiritual things.

Christ stands knocking at the door of the Ladocean church of these last days requesting we return to His Word (Rev.3:20). Bring the Gospel back!

Terry Arnold

*** A series of four sermons on this topic can be obtained from this ministry free; or by donation for costs. The subjects include ‘What is/is not the Gospel’; ‘Another gospel’; ‘Which Gospel?’; ‘Bring the Gospel back!’**

The Ecumenical Movement Continues



*‘The rise in numbers in other faiths such as Islam and Hinduism shouldn’t be seen ‘as a threat at all’, said Bishop Terry Brady, auxiliary Bishop of Sydney [Australia] as reported in *The Catholic Weekly*.*

Bishop Brady was commenting on 2011 Census figures that show *the increase in Roman Catholicism in Australia was greatly exceeded by the growth of Islam*, up 39.9% since 2006, *and Hinduism*, up 188.6% since 2001. *‘I think we have a wonderful opportunity to work hand-in-hand in Australia with the Islamic people’, he said. ‘We share so much in common’.*

(CathNews, June 27, 2012; cited in Apostasy Alert June 30)

Editor’s Comment: Roman Catholicism and other religions actually *do* now have a lot in common. Roman Catholicism is the great Chameleon. It changes its colours to suit the religion where necessary, to further ecumenism. The ecumenical cry is to find the things that are ‘similar’ for ‘unity’. But what unity is this - is it a unity in truth? Jesus prayed: **‘They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them [Set them APART] through your truth: YOUR WORD is truth...that they may be one, even AS WE ARE one’ [i.e. in Trinitarian person, work and doctrine] (Jn.17:16-21).**

Paul taught: *‘Endeavoring to keep the unity OF THE SPIRIT in the bond of peace. There is ONE body, and ONE SPIRIT, even as you are called in ONE HOPE of your calling; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, One God and Father of all’* (Eph.4:3-6).

True unity here is in *one* Holy Spirit, not the spirit in Islam, Catholicism or other religions; in *‘one hope’* - the doctrine of the coming of the Lord; in one *‘Lord’*, not the Lord of Allah or other religions, but the Lordship and deity of Christ; one *‘faith’* - *‘the faith once delivered’* by the apostles (Jude 3); *‘one baptism’* - which puts one into the body of Christ (1Cor.12:13) as ‘born again’ believers *in Jesus*. This *‘unity’* is based on the *doctrines of Christ and His work*. The ecumenical movement is not a true unity but a *union* of works and false deities.

The History of Same-Sex Marriage



The historical origins of same-sex ‘marriage’ is most prevalent in one particular epoch...not in Sodom and Gomorrah; Homosexuality was rampant there, but according to the Talmud, not homosexual ‘marriage’. The one time in history when homosexual ‘marriage’ was most evident seems to have been in the *days of Noah*...that’s what the ‘Talmud’ attributes as the final straw that led to the Flood. We read of so-called Christian Churches, globally, suddenly falling into line with this phenomenon, whilst we remember Christ’s sobering words describing world conditions just prior to His return: *‘And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man’* (Luke 17:26).

(Excerpted from Apostasy Alert, July 12, 2012)

What's Next? Trans-Gender Ministers?



Indianapolis: The Episcopal Church's *House of Bishops* on Saturday ***approved a proposal that, if it survives a final vote, would give trans-gender men and women the right to become ministers in the church...***The move comes nine years after the Episcopal Church, part of the world-wide Anglican Communion, approved its first openly gay bishop, Gene Robinson, sparking an exodus of conservative parishes. ***The church now allows homosexuals and lesbians to join the ordained ministry...the church's leadership is also due to consider approving a liturgy for same-sex weddings.***

(Susan Guyett Reuters July 08, 2012; *Apostasy Alert*, 10th July)

What the Pope Teaches



The current Pope, formerly Cardinal Ratzinger, held the office of Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly the Office of the Inquisition). He was responsible for oversight and publication of the official 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' (1994). It states the following dogma that Roman Catholics must believe: 'The Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered'. Thus, the 11th Century claim of Pope Gregory VII that the Pope is Christ's Vicar was newly expanded. What Ratzinger has added is the claim for universal, absolute power for the Pope.

But the Lord Jesus Christ entrusted the universal care of redeemed souls into the safekeeping of the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit who alone is the 'Vicar of Christ'. Because there is a direct connection between the redemption of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is a soul-damning lie to credit the role of the Holy Spirit to the Pope of Rome. Ratzinger spoke and taught publicly that the office of the Holy Spirit as Vicar of Christ is the office of the Roman Pontiff. He also taught 'The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. 'Sacramental grace' is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament'.

(Adapted from '*Apostasy Alert*' July 27, 2012)

Editor's Comment: Rome's seven sacraments were affirmed as dogma in AD 1439. According to the Roman church, if one teaches that the sacraments are not '*necessary for salvation*', they are 'cursed' (Trent Canon 4, Sess.7). Yet Romans 4, Ephesians 2:8,9 refute this clearly. The Roman church teaches they are the dispenser of the sacraments which save and sanctify (with the priest as a mediator). But if the church is the dispenser of such sacraments then the church is the dispenser of salvation. The Holy Spirit is taken out of the equation. It is no longer by grace alone. ***'And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work'*** (Rom.11:6).

What About Those Who Have Never Heard?

Recent surveys report that an increasing number of Christians and pastors are claiming that Biblical Christianity and the Gospel is not the only means to obtain eternal life. Surveys are also showing that even 'evangelical' pastors and Bible teachers are increasingly favouring the idea that those who have never heard the Gospel or of Jesus can still make it to Heaven.

What about those who never hear of the Gospel? How can they be saved?

Some estimates have as many as two billion people on planet earth as having limited or no access to the gospel. Certainly in ages past there have been millions of people who have never heard of Jesus Christ or the Gospel. Still today there are many people groups who have never heard of the salvation message. I have travelled to other countries such as Fiji where there are people who have never heard of the saviour Jesus or His Gospel. How can they be saved? Can they be saved some other way than through the good news of Jesus Christ dying as a substitute for sins? Humanly, logically and emotionally it would not seem 'fair' for people to be unable to enter the kingdom of Heaven when they have never heard of Jesus and His Gospel. But if we are *Fallen* creatures, *could it be that our thinking is also Fallen?*

What does the Bible say? The Bible is objectively clear and blunt in that there is no other way to Heaven except through hearing and believing in Jesus Christ. ***'He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God'*** (Jn.3:18); ***'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture'*** (Jn.10:9); ***'Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me'*** (Jn.14:6); ***'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved'*** (Acts 4:12).

If this is too narrow-minded for some then other mysteries such as predestination, sovereign election and even the Trinity and eternal punishment in Hell may well also be too difficult to accept.

What is often not understood is that those who have never heard of the gospel are not 'innocent'. A just judge on earth will not let the breaking of the law go unpunished. How much less will the creator and judge of all the earth let the guilty go free of punishment? Sin and sinners cannot be ignored. God's offer to Adam and Eve was rebelled against in the beginning and God has deemed to impute that sin to mankind (Rom.5:12). Every sinner is now guilty and freely sins from a sin nature that defies God. They are not forced to sin but *freely* are choosing according to their desires.

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But what about Romans 1? Does not the revelation from nature save?

It is common in modern Christianity for many to cite Romans chapter 1 and say that God's revelation in nature might be enough to save people. In other words, *'they will be judged on what light they may have been given'*. However, is this enough to save them from Hell and to Heaven? What does Romans chapter 1 say and what has Biblical Christianity said down through the ages?

Romans chapter 1 says men and woman have *'held [back] the truth'* (vs.18); that they have become *'fools'* (vs.22); that they have *'changed the truth of God into a lie'* (vs.25); and that they have *'not retained God in their knowledge'* (vs.28). *This chapter does not affirm that man can be saved by any general revelation through nature, but rather it is actually affirming that man is guilty and damned!* The passage ends with: *'Therefore you are inexcusable, O man...But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things'* (Rom.2:1,2).

Romans chapter 1 does not save, it damns! The context of Romans ch.1-3 is not salvation but to leave man without any excuse. And it gets worse by chapter 3 - no human is left *'innocent'* whether they have had the opportunity to hear the gospel or not: *'...we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes'* (Rom.3:9-18).

The above description is referring to every human born of Adam (vs.9 *'Jews and Gentiles...all under sin'*). All are under the law and no one will be able to claim *'innocence'*. All the world is *'guilty'*: *'Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God'* (vs.19).

But thats not fair?

Against our logic of why God saves some and not all, the other way of viewing the same logic is: why does God save *any* at all? *No one is sent to Hell for simply not hearing about Christ and the gospel. People are sent to Hell for their sins resident in their hearts.* Romans chapter 1 says people are condemned *on the basis of what they know, not what they don't know!* They are guilty and condemned in Adam. Yet, author Dave Hunt in his writings against *'Calvinism'* (misrepresented) states *'no one will spend eternity in the lake of fire because of their sins, they will be there for rejecting Christ and the salvation He obtained*

and freely offers to all. (1) Yet the scriptures are clear that it is man's *sin* and his works that are judged in Hell. This statement by Hunt also rejects the scriptural view that people are punished by degrees and according to their works (Matt.11:24; Rev.20:13 cf. Rom.2:5,6). And, on Hunt's terms, how can the Amazonian Indians be sent to Hell who for thousands of years never even heard of Christ, much less for '*rejecting Christ and the salvation he obtained and freely offers to all*' as Hunt says? No doubt there are those who will be in Hell who have 'rejected' the Gospel outright upon hearing it; but all who end up in Hell will be there *for their sins* resident in their hearts, *whether they heard the Gospel or not*.

Every man is '*without excuse*' for he knows there is a creator and his power is seen in creation. But that *general revelation* does not save without the gospel and Jesus Christ being known and understood. Nowhere does Romans chapter 1 or any other biblical book support the theory that men can gain enough of this general revelation about God to be saved from their sins. Romans chapters 2 and 3 nail the lid on the coffin of any of man's self justifications or reckoning of 'innocence'. By the end of chapter 3 one might well be begging for relief from the proofs of '*all*' being '*guilty*'! And Paul gives it! - in Romans 4. He gives what is available to any who will believe - God's plan of justification by faith alone and the double imputation - of sin to Christ and righteousness to man. It is only this righteousness of God through the substitutionary death and sacrifice of Christ that will settle the penalty of sin and satisfy God for entrance into a perfect, holy and sinless Heaven!

Should the reader still think that people who have never heard the gospel (or who are not predestinated) are unfairly treated by God, then again Romans 9:14-24 answers these objections. It may not fit our logic that God will have '*mercy on whom he will have mercy*' (vs.15,18) and that this could be conferred on some and not all. It is a mystery that God does not explain, except He says that He is the '*Potter*' and we the '*clay*' (Rom.9:21).

It is difficult for some to understand that a loving God can punish people according to His laws. But as we have seen, no one is 'innocent'. All are guilty and sinful. *Love without justice is not Godly love* because it is an unbiblical view of the character of God.

We are living in days when the Gospel is steadily being eroded and watered down so as to be palatable to the post-modern liberal man. But the way to salvation has not changed. It is still a call to *believe* in Jesus as the saviour and *repent* from our Hell bound sins. It is still that Christ died for sinful man as a sacrifice that satisfies the wrath of God upon sin. It is still that Christ is the *only way*, the truth and life, the *only door* to Heaven.

Terry Arnold

(1) '*What Love Is This*', P.248.

The Art of Misquoting (Part 2)

In the last issue of *Diakrisis* (July/Aug) we looked at author Dave Hunt's misquoting and misrepresentation of Spurgeon and other writers. In this part 2 we look at a classic case of misquoting by an international Brethren magazine, *Precious Seed International*. This magazine has a circulation of tens of thousands in various countries around the world. I have been reading this magazine for years and it has been a source of many excellent teaching articles. I have recommended it to my own fellowship as well as others. However, recently they misquoted Charles Spurgeon and had him teaching in opposition to what he actually believed. The error I expose here is not just the misquoting, but the amazing lack of willingness to correct the error. Sadly, because of the principle involved, and the lack of humility and openness to correction displayed by the editors, I will no longer recommend or distribute this magazine.

The heart of the issue

The difference between 'free will' and 'free agency' was well known and understood *until recent times*. Today many Arminian Bible teachers simply do not understand how these terms were historically taught and applied. Many writers quote Spurgeon in defence of 'free will' without realising he actually wrote *against* 'free will' and *for* 'free agency'!

'Free will' is the faculty of choice. It is the ability to make choices. 'Free will' in its literal sense means *to be able to choose one thing from another or one way from another, without any forces or any influences whatsoever*. 'Free Agency' is to be distinguished from 'free will' in that 'free agency' means we can voluntarily choose, *but we do so according to our desires or our nature*.

The unsaved man has 'free agency' but not 'free will' when it comes to salvation. He is bound by his Adamic nature in its bias toward sin. This bias is irreversible unless God intervenes. Fallen man simply cannot 'will' or 'seek' after God's will. The scriptures testify to this (Rom.8:7,8; Rom.3:11; Jn.1:12,13).

Unsaved and fallen mankind is not 'free' to seek after God but rather is a 'slave' to sin (Rom.6:9,14; 7:1). Therefore, how can we say this fallen race has a 'will' that is completely 'free'? Yet this thinking is today so prevalent in the teaching of salvation doctrine and often highlighted in the presentation of 'methods of evangelism'.

This is not to deny man has a 'will' and is responsible for sin. But the scriptures above show the unsaved 'will' is not 'free' in that a person is able to 'choose' salvation. The unsaved 'will' is not independent or free of influences and consequences from the 'Fall'. Scriptures describes men as those who love darkness (Jn.3:19), are in bondage to sin (Gal.4:3; 6:17,20), and taken captive by Satan to do his will (2Tim.2:25) until the Son sets them 'free' (Jn.8:36). Why would the Son need to set them 'free' from sin if they were 'free' to turn from it themselves? Were they not 'servants' (literally 'slaves') to sin (Rom.6:17-20; Jn.8:34; Gal.4:7)?

The misquote

In the magazine *'Precious Seed International'*, in an article titled *'The Sovereignty of God'*, and under a sub-heading *'Divine Sovereignty and the scope of man's free will'* came this statement and subsequent quote from Spurgeon:

'Some have wrongly concluded that since God is absolutely sovereign, then man does not have a free will. Scripture emphasises that God has sovereignly granted to man the ability to make free choices...C.H. Spurgeon adds, 'man is a free agent, a responsible agent, so that his sin is his own willful sin and lies with him and never with God - and yet at the same time God's purposes are fulfilled, and His will is done even by demons and corrupt men? I cannot comprehend it...I worship a God I never expect to comprehend'. (1)

The quote from Spurgeon was cut in the original and re-pasted. But this quote used by the writer, a David Dunlap of the U.S., is actually arguing for 'free agency', not 'free will'. The writer did not understand that Spurgeon was *opposed to free will and taught only free agency*. I wrote to this magazine and the author and asked them to correct this in a following edition, since it had Spurgeon teaching the *opposite* to what he believed! The replies from the editors were disappointing and neither they, or the author of the article, showed a desire to correct the mistake publicly.

The author of the article, David Dunlap, replied: *'Your arguments concerning the difference between 'Free will' and 'Free agency' are well taken. Although I believe that all major commentators and church leaders (apart from Pelgius) understand that our fallen nature limits the exercise of our free will, to a greater or lesser degree. Nevertheless, your point is well taken. As to a correction in Precious Seed magazine, this is something the editorial board of Precious Seed must take up. I personally think that the fine distinction between 'Free will' and 'Free agency' will be lost on most Precious Seed readers...Thank you for drawing our attention to this important subtlety of doctrinal position'*.

The editor of the magazine, John Bennett, wrote: *'Although we accept that David Dunlap's use of the Spurgeon quotation was, at best, selective, we do make clear that each article expresses the views of the author rather than those of the committee of PSF'*.

After a second attempt to have a small correction written and published, (I even offered to write it for them), the editor wrote: *'While I am disappointed that there should be continuing correspondence on this matter...we consider the matter to be now closed...we will not be printing anything further on the matter...I hope that on this occasion I have made the matter clear. I repeat that I regard the matter as closed'*.

Firstly, the difference between 'free will' and 'free agency' is not a 'subtle' one or a 'fine distinction'. Even a cursory reading of the relevant material by Spurgeon, the Reformers, Puritans and the *early Brethren founders* will show they took this issue seriously. 'Free will' is actually the major part of the Pelagian heresy of the 4th century! Secondly, the statement *'All major*

commentators and church leaders (apart from Pelgius) understand that our fallen nature limits the exercise of our free will, to a greater or lesser degree' is historically untrue! Almost all believed original sin gave the unsaved complete inability to make 'decisions' for God. They described this as a *total inability*, or as it has come to be known in recent times, 'Total Depravity'. This statement by Dunlap whitewashes the divide between the so called ability of man in 'free will' and the true inability of man in 'free agency'. In 'free agency' man is only able to choose *according to his nature* and that nature will not have him seeking God. The scriptures are explicit on this point: ***Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were BY NATURE the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened [made alive] us together with Christ, by grace you are saved*** (Eph.2:2-5).

We were '***children of disobedience***', our *behaviour* (vs.3 '***conversation***') was in the '***lusts of our flesh***' and we were '***fulfilling***' our natural '***desires***' which the bible says can never please God (Rom.8:8; 3:20). Our wills were bent and biased to fulfilling that which our natures demanded. And we freely willed these 'desires'. The vital point here is in the phrase '***by nature***'. The reason why we as unsaved people were so 'depraved' in our heart was because of our 'nature'. '***By nature***' we were '***children of wrath***'. Does this sound like unsaved man has any ability to escape from a condition of a heart that is '***dead in sins***'? Does this sound like any '*limit*' in '*the exercise of our free will*', or '*to a greater or lesser extent*'? Where in these verses is there to be found a 'will' that is in any way 'free' to bring about salvation?

If there is even a 'limited' ability in 'free will' then why is it that '***the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned***' (1Cor.2:14); '***the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be***' (Rom.8:7,8). Does this sound like a 'will' that is in any way 'free'?

If there is even a 'limited' ability in 'free will' why did Jesus say '***No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him...***' (Jn.6:44)? If man's 'will' is 'free' to any 'limit', then why the phrase '***no man can come***'?

If there is even a 'limited' ability in 'free will' then why is it that '***there is none that seeks after God***' (Rom.3:11)? Why is it that it is always God seeking and choosing man and not man seeking or choosing God? '***For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost***' (Lk.19:10).

If there is even a 'limited' ability in 'free will' then why is it that Satan now cannot, and will not, choose to love God? Does Satan have even a 'limited' 'free will'? If Satan has any so-called 'free will' it is only in one *direction* - to

choose evil! Is this really 'free will'? Did God give any hope or 'free will' to Satan when in judgement he said '**you are cursed**' (Gen.3:15)?

If there is even a 'limited' ability in 'free will' then why is it that '**the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them**' (2Cor.4:4)? How can unsaved man be 'free' in his will if his mind has been '**blinded**'?

If there is even a 'limited' ability in 'free will' then why is there the necessity for God to 'free' us? '**If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed**' (Jn.8:36). If unsaved man has a will that is entirely 'free' then why does the Son need to set him 'free'? What does he need to be 'free' from?

If there is even a 'limited' ability in 'free will' then does man also have a limit on his 'free will' *in Heaven*? If man has 'free will' in Heaven, then he could freely sin. But if we were free to sin in Heaven, it would not be 'Heaven', which is promised to be a place without sin (Rev.21:27).

If there is even a 'limited' ability in 'free will' then why is it that after the new birth, man cannot freely choose to rebel against God forever? If his will is 'free', is it also 'free' to turn from his salvation and be lost forever? Is he robbed of that freedom? Why is he not free to stop believing? Rather, his will is now bent in another direction - towards the holiness and the righteousness of God - the very opposite of its position prior to salvation. In the saved state the believer lives in the freedom of God's will for he is free from the slavery of his fleshly will! Our mind is now not so much ours, but Christ's. It is now '**God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure**' (Phil.2:13).

Let Spurgeon Speak!...

If the writer is thinking I make too much of the distinction between 'free will' and 'free agency' and the misquote of Spurgeon, then read what Spurgeon himself says of 'free will': '*This is one of the great guns of the Arminians, mounted upon the top of their walls, and often discharged with terrible noise against the poor Christians called Calvinists...Free-will is nonsense. Freedom cannot belong to will any more than ponderability can belong to electricity. They are altogether different things. Free agency we may believe in, but free-will is simply ridiculous. The will is well known by all to be directed by the understanding, to be moved by motives, to be guided by other parts of the soul, and to be a secondary thing*'. (2)

...*'It may seem a harsh sentiment; but he who in his soul believes that man does of his own free-will turn to God, cannot have been taught of God, for that is one of the first principles taught us when God begins with us, that we have neither will nor power, but that he gives both; that he is 'Alpha and Omega' in the salvation of men. He who in his soul believes that man does of his own free will turn to God, cannot have been taught of God*'.

The *Precious Seed* article is a *Brethren* publication. But the founders of the

Brethren movement themselves would have been taken aback at the misquote! J.N.Darby, one of the early founders of the Brethren movement, wrote: *'This fresh breaking out of the doctrine of the free-will ministers to the pretension of the natural man not to be entirely lost, for that is just what it amounts to...it completely changes the whole idea of Christianity and entirely perverts it. If Christ came to save that which is lost, free-will has no more place. Not that God prevents man from receiving Christ - far from it. But even when God employs all possible motives, everything that is capable of exerting influence over the heart of man, it only serves to prove that man will have none of it, that his heart is so corrupt, and his will so determined not to submit to God (however much it may be of the devil who encourages him in sin), that nothing can induce him to receive the Lord, and to forsake sin...on account of the dominion of sin of which he is the slave, and that voluntarily, he cannot escape from his condition, and choose the good - even while acknowledging it to be good, and approving of it - then he has no liberty whatever. 'He is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be; so that, they that are in the flesh cannot please God'...Arminianism, or rather Pelagianism, pretends that man can choose...free-will is a false and absurd theory...man is disposed to follow that which is evil...he has a will and lusts, and they lead him. Man was free in paradise, but then he was in the enjoyment of good. He made use of his free-will, and consequently he is a sinner. To leave him to his free-will, now that he is disposed to do evil, would be cruelty. God has presented to him the choice, but it was to convince the conscience of the fact that, in any case, man would have neither good nor God...'* (3)

George Mueller, the founding member of the Plymouth Brethren movement, also taught strongly on the same doctrines. How is it that this matter is only 'subtle' and a 'fine distinction' and that this would be 'lost on...readers', especially when this magazine 'Precious Seed' is full of doctrinal teaching articles, and some in depth? And why do we assume that readers cannot understand what the great divines of the past taught on these matters?

What is displayed here is a lack of scholarship and research into what these original writers believed on the doctrines of Grace. But worse is the lack of a willingness to be corrected. I expose this magazine here only after several attempts were made to have the author and the editors write a simple short correction in a following edition. To date no correction has ever been offered. As we wrote in part 1 of this article - there is a principle of *integrity* here that cannot be ignored. Despite what ideas the reader may have on this subject of 'free will' and 'free agency', to have Spurgeon teaching in favour of something which he wrote against, is reprehensible! Spurgeon said *'A magazine which is not outspoken, and is destitute of principle, is a literary nuisance'*.

Terry Arnold

(1) Article written by David Dunlap in the Brethren publication *Precious Seed International* Feb/2012, P.21

(2) Sermon 'Free Will - A Slave' - December 2, 1855, at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

(3) J.N.Darby (Elberfeld, October 23rd, 1861)

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

The Editor and 'Limited Atonement'?

Your 'Diakrisis' magazine is good and informative but in the article 'The Art of Misquoting - Part 1' [July/Aug/2012] you are wrong saying the atonement is limited. Christ died for everyone; it is not Christ's fault people reject Him.

(J.T., WA)

Editor's reply: It often surprises me what people 'read' into articles. *Nowhere in the article did I say the atonement is 'limited'.* The article was not about my beliefs *but Spurgeon's.* I wrote that Spurgeon was misquoted by Dave Hunt who wrote '*Spurgeon rejected Limited Atonement*' and that '*he did so in unequivocal language*'. Spurgeon, although he and the historic 'Calvinists' taught that the atonement was unlimited in its *sufficiency* to save all, he also taught it was *limited* in that it is *effectively* applied to some. Spurgeon did not believe the extent of the atonement was universal but that it was a '*special and particular redemption*'.

Then I wrote this: '*Whether we agree with Spurgeon or not, to misquote Spurgeon as 'rejecting Limited Atonement'...is simply dishonest to what Spurgeon believed!*' There was no statement by me *in the article* about any 'limit' in the atonement. But here now is what I believe - this is the same as the historic leaders believed, including Spurgeon, Whitefield, Newton, Bunyan, Darby, Mueller, etc...and taught in most of the Confessions of Faith including the Westminster and Baptist: **The blood of Jesus is *sufficient* for all humans to be saved. But it will in the end be *effective* for, or applied, only to some, considering 'few' will ultimately be saved (Matt.7:14; Jn.10:11-15; Heb.10:14; Matt.20:28; 1Cor.15:22; Matt.1:21; Rev.5:9,10).**

If there is no 'limit' to the atonement in at least its end application, then why are people in Hell not atoned for? Both Arminians and Calvinists admit the atonement is ultimately only applied *to believers*. If '*Christ died for everyone*' then has Christ died for those in Hell? If so, why are they not saved? Why is Christ not interceding for them as high priest? Did Christ intend to atone for everybody? Was the atonement in the Old Testament for other nations outside of Israel? Has Christ's work on the cross failed, since many are already in Hell? Was His work frustrated by sinful man? If Christ died for the sins of those in Hell then why are they being punished *twice* for their sins - once by Christ in substitution and then again in Hell?

Hi Terry, I join with those who support you and pray for your continual stand for truth. Your article on Post-modernism [July/Aug/2012] is very disturbing and I wonder how far this will go before the church stands up or the Lord returns. The silence of the true church is 'deafening' on matters of truth in the public forum.

(M.S., Sydney)

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

The Context of Romans 1 & 2?

Brother Terry, in Romans ch.2 the 1st paragraph God is dealing with someone to bring to repentance, but the man is hardening his own heart...God is dealing with man but man is refusing and rejecting God's grace. Do we not see clearly from this part in the word of God that Grace can be rejected and resisted. Therefore the expression 'Irresistible Grace' is not Biblical. God does deal with sinners to bring to repentance but they reject and resist His grace and consequently God is just in condemning the sinner. What do you think?

(D.J., Sydney)

Editors reply: Romans ch. 1 is *NOT* God bringing anyone (the hypothetical '*o man*') to '*repentance*'. Repentance is something not known (2:4). The passage ends with *ALL* men being shown their sin nature and '*all the world*' being '*guilty*'. The context is *all* men in Adam are '*without any excuse*'. Romans chapter 1 says men and woman have '*held back the truth*' (vs.18); that they have become '*fools*' (vs.22); that they have '*exchanged the truth for a lie*' (vs.25); and that they have not '*retained God in their knowledge*' (vs.28). The passage ends in ch.2 (there should be no chapter division): '*Therefore you are inexcusable, O man...But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things*' (Rom.2:1,2).

Romans chapter 1 does not save, it damns. It leaves man without any excuse. And it gets worse by Romans chapter 3 - no human is left '*innocent*': '*...we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes*' (Rom.3:9-18).

The above description is referring to *every human born of Adam* (vs.9 '*Jews and Gentiles...all under sin*'). All are under the law before being saved No one will be able to claim '*innocence*'. '*Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*' (vs.19).

Romans chapter 1 says *all* are '*guilty*', condemned in Adam and '*without excuse*', for man knows there is a creator and His power is seen in creation. But this general revelation *cannot save* without the gospel and Jesus Christ being known. By the end of ch.3 one might well be begging for relief from the

Continued next page >

proofs of *'all'* being *'guilty'*! And Paul gives it! - in Romans 4. He gives what is available to any who will believe - God's plan of justification by faith alone and the double imputation - of sin to Christ and righteousness to man.

Man is not *'hardening his own heart'* in ch.2, for God already *'gave them up'* to what is already in their hearts (1:26). All of mankind does *'reject and resist God's grace'*, and for that they are rightly condemned. However, the elect are *'drawn'* effectually to Christ by God (I do not use the term *'irresistible'*). They have their hearts changed to receive and believe the Gospel. Without this *'calling'* and *'drawing'* no man could be saved. And who in their right mind would *'resist'* this salvation when shown what it entailed? The Scriptures are clear that *all* those *'drawn'* *'will come'* and these *same ones* will be *'raised up'*. *'All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out (vs.37)...this is the Father's will which has sent me, that of all which he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again...every one which sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up...(vs.39,40)...No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day'* (vs.44). The drawing and coming here is *'effectual'*. It might be temporarily *'resisted'* but not ultimately, otherwise God's promise here of salvation and the *'raising up'* is made void.

Calvinism, Women, Babies and Pastors...

[Editor's replies in bold and brackets] *Dear Terry,*...

Calvinism: *I was dismayed to see bickering about Calvinism which is not required for salvation, when so many are ignorant of the Trinity and salvation by grace...there is so much perversion of the true Gospel...*

[**'Calvinism'** is an unfortunate name attached to what were really the **'Doctrines of Grace'**. But doctrines that *are* about *salvation* and *grace* I consider important and worth contending for! I did not think this was **'bickering'**, which is literally **'a quarrel about petty points'**. Is it **'petty'** to have alternate views as to how a person is saved?]

Women in ministry: *While it is clear that the Lord does not require women to carry the burden of leadership, surely upholding and rightly dividing the word of God is the real issue? I was recently astonished to hear a man teach that 'Jesus had to die spiritually'. No one questioned it. The Bible says 'a body was prepared' and offered for our sins and Jesus yielded up His spirit. Should biblically ignorant men go unchallenged while knowledgeable women be silent?*

[No one is saying women must *never* speak. The issue is about not **'to teach or to usurp authority over the man'** (1Tim.2:11-14). Of course a woman can correct or challenge a man. (I would expect that not to be done in public in a church service?). There are many opportunities for **'knowledgeable**

women' to correct such teaching. Aquila and Priscilla corrected Apollos (Acts 18:26).

Babies in Heaven: If the Lord elects adult sinners to be saved, why not babies? The great comfort for mothers when babies died like flies was that they were 'safe in the arms of Jesus'...For such is the kingdom of God and was King David's expectation...the modern teaching about babies being rotten little sinners has resulted in so called Christian parenting courses telling mothers to ignore the cries of their babies because 'they are just trying to get their own way'. Crying is their only form of communication. The result is a generation of confused and unhappy children...

[Of course babies can be the 'elect'. God has decreed an elect '*before the foundation of the world*' (Eph.1:4; 2Thess.2:13). But to be Justified one must '*believe*'. Mark 10:14 ('*such is the kingdom of God*') does not state that all babies are saved. And I have never heard it said that babies are '*rotten little sinners*'. But Scripture does say all of us have inherited a sinful nature from Adam. Our hearts are sinful and deserving of '*death*' (Ps.51:5; Rom.5:12). As for '*parenting*' - mothers might withhold comfort to crying babies so that they do not learn that this is the way to attract parental attention? And the '*generation of confused and unhappy children*' I suggest is largely the result of a lack of discipline and the absence of their parents?]

Pastors: Surely this is an office (function as a shepherd), not a title.

(D.S., Qld)

[The office is an '*elder*'. The word '*pastor*' is mentioned only *once* for a human - then it is described as a 'gift' by Christ to the church (Eph.4:8-13)]

The Gospel - to the Elect or to All?

Dear Terry, I have found that the book you sent was very interesting and quite inspiring. ['An Invitation to Live' by Blanchard - a revision of Baxter's classic 'A Call to the Unconverted']. It puts man's problems so clearly. However, at the end of the intro, I quote: 'I write as one who will soon be in another world, and as one knows that you will soon be there too. If you want to meet me in the comforting presence of our Maker, if you want to be received into God's eternal glory and to escape the everlasting torments of hell, I beg of you to hear what God is saying to you and obey his call, and turn to him-and live! If you refuse, I call upon you to answer to God for your refusal, to bear me witness that I warned you, to admit that you are to be condemned not because you were not called to turn and live, but because you were not willing to do so'.

Does this highlighted section contradict the doctrine of Election and Predestination?...Baxter was obviously used by God. I understood that we are not of ourselves able to turn to God. This can only happen if God wills it, not us!

(D.G., Tasmania)

Editor's reply: This book was written by a Puritan and 'Calvinist'.

Continued next page >

Baxter won to the Lord almost half the town of Kidderminster. More than 1,000 people crammed into his church each Sunday. It is reputed not a single soul fell away. His book also won thousands of souls. It is one of the most riveting books I have read! Many regard this book as the greatest book ever written on conversion. It leaves no stone unturned in conviction of sin!

To answer the question: There is a 'general call' to all. *The Gospel must be preached to all.* We do not know who the 'elect' are. We are to exhort *all* to turn to God for salvation. We must alarm the unsaved we speak with regarding their dangerous position. Baxter was ensuring that the reader is well warned. Some men too will be judged on what they did with the Gospel (there are degrees of punishment in Hell). We are *not* called to explain 'election' to those we present the Gospel to. That may come later as doctrine. The Gospel presented by an 'Arminian' or a 'Calvinist' of any shade can and should still be the same Gospel. *The warning Baxter gives to all does not contradict election or predestination, for we do not know who the elect are.* Those who will not 'turn' will be '*not willing to do so*' as all are at some time.

It is true that we cannot of ourselves will to be saved (Rom.8:7,8; 3:11; Jn.6:44 etc). That ability must be sovereignly given to a person. Because we do not know who the 'elect' are, we *must* treat everyone as though they could be - and the result is God's responsibility. We are but 'co-workers'.

Baxter believed in sovereign election, predestination, etc. But he also understood that *the gospel is to be given to all.* When he says '*you were not willing to do so*' - he is referring to the inability of man's will but also to the fact that unsaved man is still freely willing *not* to be saved and *not* to seek God. He is not being forced; he is 'freely' willing ('free agency') to disregard God and this is *according to his nature.* It is not always an easy point to understand logically because you have two seemingly opposites - the inability of man and the sovereign election of God. It is God who effectually changes the heart of those he 'draws'. He changes their will from one that is freely choosing 'according to his nature' (Eph.2:2-5) - to one that now wants to choose Christ...and who will be '*Born Again*' and '*raised up*' (Jn.6:37-44).

The current Pope: Terry, we find your newsletters so encouraging and thought provoking. Thankyou so much for your efforts and love for the truth of God's word. I just read 'The inquisition' by Baigent & Leigh. It opened my eyes about the Roman Catholic church, its history and recent history, including Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger...he is called the great 'Inquisitor'. Even though the 'inquisition' changed its name to 'The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith', Ratzinger was the leader and is now the Pope. How many know of his true background and what he stands for? Not much has changed since those terrible dark ages of the past. It's only more disguised.

(C.G., NSW)

Terry's Itinerary News

Terry and Beth are praying that they will be free to travel again and do an extended itinerary in Feb-May 2013 - if possible to Tasmania, NSW, Victoria and Sth. Australia. If any churches wish to be included in the itinerary, please contact Terry. There is now a wide range of seminars and topical and expository sermons to choose from. A list of these titles can be sent out. Beth is again available to teach on various topics to women, children, Sunday school and help with any home schooling needs. Please contact this ministry if you are interested in having Terry and Beth visit and we could advise a range of dates for various areas of Australia. Phone Terry on 0411489472 or e-mail: taministries@bigpond.com

A tentative itinerary will be published in upcoming newsletters.

Terry's Itinerary

Nov.10th (Sat) 2.30pm Harristown Assembly, Toowoomba Ph.46309991 or 46966020 Topics: **Terry's testimony from Pentecostalism; 'Baptism with the Spirit'; Healing; Which gospel?...and more**

Nov.11th (Sun) 9.30am & 6pm Harristown Assembly (contacts as above)

'Church Wilderness'

Dear Terry, Please send me your sermon 'Bring the Gospel back!'...I'm in church wilderness at the moment. The choice is ecumenical churches or legalistic Independent...churches - whom I have upset because I could not keep their expectations. But I know the Lord Jesus Christ is still with me and I pray and stay in His word...'Once saved always saved' is a question for me because of verses like Roman 14:23 'he that doubts is damned'. Being diabetic I'm in doubt of what I can eat...Many scriptures also seem to contradict...Rev.3:5; Heb.10:25.

(Name withheld at editor's discretion)

Editor's reply: It is certainly difficult to find balanced churches today.

Romans 14:23 - The word 'damned' is *not referring here to salvation but to 'if he eat'*. It's about eating or not eating certain foods in front of other people and causing a 'stumbling block'. If one doubts then one should not eat. The context has nothing to do with salvation.

Revelation 3:5 - *'...I will not blot out his name out of the book of life...'* Many quote this Scripture to say God can blot out names from the Book of Life, that one might lose salvation, or that election/predestination is not settled as a prior decree. The context is *to believers* in Sardis (vs.4). The passage is not saying God will blot out any name, but the opposite!: *'I will NOT blot out his name out of the book of life'*. People can imply God could 'blot out' names, but that is not in the text. All the text says is: Overcomers, those clothed in God's righteousness, will *not* have their names blotted out.

Heb.10:25 - is exhorting *believers to fellowship*. It is not saying that if you do not attend church you are not saved. Yet believers will *want* to fellowship.

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

New Seminar CD and Booklet

Recently Terry conducted a seminar on the ‘*Ecumenical Movement*’. There were many contrasts shown between the ecumenical gospel and the Biblical Gospel, as well as various ecumenical arguments answered. This is a very important and current topic. Christians need to be informed, taught and equipped on this issue! The CD’s are available with a booklet of notes. Cost: Free; or donation for costs (approx. \$7 including postage).

Dear Terry...Thanks for the 5 studies on Predestination and the Doctrines of Grace. I’ve been a believer for many years...No one showed me this, but reading God’s word and thinking of my dramatic conversion I know it was all of God and nothing of me. Your 5 studies have strengthened my faith; it needed strengthening and they were needed at church here. Please keep me a copy of the new book on Calvinism/Arminianism. God bless you in service to the Lord.

(Name withheld at editor’s discretion)

Prayer/Praise Points

- Pray for the working out of an itinerary to various states in early 2013. Pray for finances for maintenance needed on the bus for this trip.
- Praise the Lord and thank you to those who have donated towards the printing of our new book ‘*Calvinism and Arminianism - Out of the Maze*’.
- Praise the Lord for Terry’s latest books now being sold in bookstores.

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