

Subject: Concerning Calvinism: Did you write that?
From: Andrew Patrick <brother.bird.rning@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, 29 Oct 2010 00:05:18 -0500
To: RieskeKR@gmail.com

Dear Kent,

I was reading your "Calvinism" web page at <http://www.biblelife.org/calvinism.htm> and I encountered a specific paragraph that I thought was particularly interesting:

You wrote:

"Certainly God is sovereign. However, John Calvin used sovereignty as an excuse to formulate doctrines which violated God's other attributes. Calvin's doctrines of Unconditional Election and Limited Atonement predestine much of humanity to eternal torment in violation of God's attributes of love, justice, mercy and grace. Doctrines which are correctly interpreted from Scripture will not violate any of God's attributes."

Did you really mean that? Please do not misunderstand. **I am not criticizing this statement at all.** In fact, I wholeheartedly agree, but I am not sure you realize the full implications and ramifications of what you just said. Please bear with me for a moment, because I think I have something for you here that you may like:

Another person I know wrote:

"This doctrine is so horrible, that I am persuaded, if there were a council of unclean spirits assembled in hell, **and their prince the devil were to put the question** either to all of them in general, or to each in particular, to learn their opinion about **the most likely means of stirring up the hatred of men against God their Maker**; nothing could be invented by them that would be more efficacious for this purpose, or that could put **a greater affront upon God's love for mankind**, than that infamous decree of the late Synod, and the decision of that detestable formulary, **by which the far greater part of the human race are condemned to hell for no other reason, than the mere will of God**, without any regard to sin; the necessity of sinning, as well as that of being damned, being fastened on them by that great nail of the decree before-mentioned."

That sounds very similar in spirit to what you said above. Who said this? **King James Stuart I of England**, in regards to the infamous Synod of Dort, even referring to the freshly declared doctrines of five point Calvinism. I believe that so far you are in good company.

But I want to call attention to your original quote (and I believe you are sincere) and point out that you said that if God were to predestine much of humanity to eternal torment this would be a violation against everything we know about the attributes of the God of the Bible, including his love, justice, mercy, and grace. That is exactly what you said. **Believest thou this?**

From your statement of beliefs at <http://www.biblelife.org/faith.htm> you also said:

"We must take every word at its primary, ordinary, literal, and usual meaning unless the context indicates clearly otherwise."

Yet in your essay on John Calvin, you also wrote:

"Truly John Calvin is burning in Hell for his heresy, blasphemy of God and murder of many."

Let us safely assume that John Calvin is wicked. My objection to your statement is that the primary, ordinary, literal, and usual meaning of scripture tells us that the wicked rest in death, for they have not yet been raised in judgment:

Job 3:17-19 KJV

(17) **There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.**

(18) There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

(19) The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

I would like you to please consider for a moment what you said concerning how we can tell if we are correctly interpreting scripture. Does it not make sense (justice) that God would reserve punishment or reward until the day of judgment? Does not our scripture literally say of the dead that the wicked and the weary alike are at rest?

And finally, where is the love or mercy in tormenting anyone or anything for an infinite duration without hope of repentance, and most importantly, which would by necessity require **a Divine Sealing of their Will to Prevent Any Possibility of Future Repentance** just in case they would somehow change their mind and love the God that would torture them without mercy for infinite duration?

If we are considering the words of scripture as inspired, and in their normal and ordinary and literal sense, we are told that Satan the devil will be destroyed and reduced to ashes, consumed by worms, and shall be no more. If the Prince of Darkness himself will not survive the torments of fire, why should we think that those who are described as mortals who have not been given the gift of life should live any longer in a fate aptly called the second death?

I have looked at your statement of beliefs, on the section concerning the devil. Because you (correctly) recognize passages like Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 as pertaining to Satan, also called Lucifer, I believe I could show this to you very easily in moments, with these and other scriptures. To the person who trusts the words of the King James Bible, the evidence is simply overwhelming.

I also have a very high view of scripture and the utmost respect for the King James translation. Perhaps you have suffered criticism from others because of your respect for the Bible, and I will assure you that I will not say that you have been too extreme. If anything, I may seem more extreme, because I see important doctrinal differences that have arisen even between the Authorized King James and the New King James Version.

I would like to ask you to please be willing to reconsider what you believe about death and hell. I appeal to you on three separate but complementary points, all taken from your own words and writings:

1. **Your statement of faith** asks for a plain and literal reading of scriptures whenever possible, thus implying that when God says that the wicked shall "perish" and "burn up" that these

words are also meant in their usual sense.

2. **What we know of God's love** contradicts what it may have assumed concerning the fate of the wicked, and stands in opposition to God's love, mercy, and justice. This is such a contradiction that many people cannot even talk about this. Consider that the Calvinist who serves (and wishes to become) a cruel tyrant has no concern with torturing his fellow man without possibility of redemption.
3. **Considering what you have said concerning the free will of man**, unless God would purposely block the free will of those "those in hell for eternity" it is inevitable that some of them would genuinely repent. At this point, because God would not (or could not?) destroy the wicked, God must either ignore a genuine repentance, or one must consider universalism. The former is unthinkable but both are contrary to scripture (Psalm 34:18, 51:17, Exodus 32:33, Psalm 145:20, Matthew 10:28).

I am not Universalist. When God says he shall "burn up" the wicked I believe he surely will, and when he says there shall be "no more pain" I also believe this is consistent with the character of God. Just as the god of Calvinism is a false god and a cruel tyrant, please consider that there is a similar dilemma with a God of never-ending pain and eternal torment.

I do not ask you to believe this without overwhelming proof from scripture, and this I offer, if you are only willing to talk with me and ask me any question that you will. Please consider your own words on Calvinism and from your statement of beliefs, that right now it seems you have a contradiction.

Act 24:14-15 KJV

(14) But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, **believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:**

(15) And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, **that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.**

I only ask you to be willing to study the scriptures with me, believing all that is written in the law and the prophets, the gospels and the epistles, and the Revelation of Jesus Christ, in perfect agreement with every word, letter, and even every punctuation mark in the King James Bible.

Is this not the gospel?

Joh 3:16 KJV

(16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, **that whosoever believeth in him should not perish**, but have everlasting life.

They that believe on him shall have everlasting life, but the wicked shall perish. Everlasting life is the opposite of perish. This well-known verse does more than simply stand against Calvinism... everlasting life is only for those that believe, and the alternative is to perish. Perish is a clearly understood word when allowed to operate in its normal literal sense.

What I am offering is not something terrible or horrible (like Calvinism) but a gospel of grace and joy that is entirely compatible with the God of Love and Mercy and Justice, without moral or scriptural contradiction.

I sincerely hope that we may talk.

Take care,

-Andrew

<http://occupy-till-i-come.webs.com/>