

Literal vs. Liberal
Gospel Doctrine Controversy

The Two Sides:

- A. Calvinism – Literal interpretation of salvation doctrine.
B. Arminianism – Liberal “ “ “ “ .

Notes on the above theological conflict:

Side A – Original, unified church belief of literal biblical doctrine.

Side B – Modern, radically modified (liberalized) gospel theology.

Essential Differences – A vs. B.

1. Truth vs. fabrication.
2. Absolute vs. relative (principles).
3. Spirit (new man) vs. flesh (old man).
4. Logic vs. rationalization.
5. Study vs. indoctrination.
6. Conviction vs. consensus.
7. Theology vs. philosophy.
8. Doctrinal integrity vs. infidelity.
9. Loyalty vs. betrayal.
10. God's will vs. man's will.
11. God's approval vs. God's disapproval.
12. Edification vs. degeneration.
13. Rewards vs. loss of rewards.
14. Commendation vs. censure.

Narrative Summary of Items 1-14.

Item 1 – Truth vs. fabrication:

In this case – salvation doctrine.

Is the truth a positive, unequivocal fact: in the main and details?

Is the truth always definitely determinable?

If we say yes, why? What would be the best reason?

Would it not be that God would be specific and unquestionably clear in his revelations?

I do not mean that all scriptural declarations are ultra-simple to understand.

Hence, the injunction: “study to show thyself approved.

But, neither is God's word confusing because of language, or any other assumed difficulties.

Any misinterpretation, and resultant wrong doctrine is man's fault: not God's!

Reflection upon the fact of God's perfection should tell us that His word says exactly what

he intended to say.

Should we try to blame anything misinterpreted on translation?

Would not God superintend and control man's work in the translating and recording process?

There are indeed many manuscripts and translations that are erroneous, or corrupted.

But that God would make sure that we would have the authentic scriptures in our time, should be unquestionable to us.

Man cannot thwart God's purposes, no matter how much disservice and damage they may do-- "innocently", or otherwise.

Why, then, do we have mass indoctrination with false salvation theology?

Which is the negative side of Item A: fabrication.

For, it is no innocent misinterpretation.

In fact, the errant, specious philosophy of Arminianism is so infectious to gullible young (new) Christians that from very early on, they are driven by a built-in bias that forces everything to conform to that premise.

I know, because it took me ten years or more to begin to question my then-wrong beliefs, and begin the difficult deprogramming process.

Did I have a good excuse? No! We are each responsible from day one to verify whether what we learn or are taught is the truth—before error can set in! Acts 17:10-11.

Where is the godly fear which if truly possessed, would make a Christian be committed to learn the literal truth of God's word, and not dare to modify it, liberalize it, or even continue to live with disagreement, or serious questions of its absolute meaning?

Where are the Daniels, the Pauls, and the rank and file believers with the credentials that the early Christians had?

There are better character traits than fear, which ought to motivate a Christian to be careful to hold sound doctrine.

A basic, respectful desire to honor God and his word in its full unequivocal meaning, no matter what its implications are, or commitment it requires within the church and in the world, should be a guiding principle.

Indeed, we owe God that kind of love, loyalty, devotion, and reverence—and nothing less! But, instead, much less fidelity is what he gets from most of the church!

What is it that makes a Christian think that he has the liberty to think, or act independently of God? And yet, it is done all the time.

By and large, we just don't take our responsibility seriously enough. Which is why we are in the corrupted state that the church is in today.

Item 2 – Absolute vs. relative:

This comparison should not need much more elaboration than what the words mean in themselves; which is to say, that doctrinal subjects only have one essential meaning in principle, which with

proper study is determinable by all Christians. Therefore, there is only correct interpretation, and anything at variance with that is a false doctrinal element--not to be advocated, or promoted, or disseminated in any way, ever!

Thought – People do not like to be bound by hard and fast rules or limits. I.e., that they must do such and such, to the letter.

But, a Christian should love to be bound by an absolute principle. If he yields to his new nature, he will live within the demands of that moral rule, and being thus obedient to God, will be edified, blessed, and secure. But, if he lets his old nature dominate, or operate, in a given instance, he will not stay within the bounds of literal principles, and the results will be just the opposite. All having been caused by getting off on the wrong foot in the beginning of the Christian's life, with a false doctrinal position.

For which, no excuse will ever exonerate us, because God's grace will always be sufficient for us to know what is right, and to be able to succeed—when we submit and surrender to his declared word, and discernible will.

Item 3 – Spirit vs. flesh:

Those are the two root factors involved in the controversy.

Christians determine the truth, which Calvinism represents, by the Spirit (their new nature), whereas Arminianism, being error, or misinterpreted salvation doctrine, is a product of the flesh (or old nature).

In other words (in the latter case), what most Christians unfortunately believe about God's plan, or work of salvation comes from the carnal (unspiritual) mind of man—not God.

Arminius was the main promoter of the corrupt theological ideas, and it has been perpetuated by most of the church ever since.

That is your heritage—the “traditions of men.” And you think you represent God—when in truth He will have no part of it, but will in fact hold you at fault for not maintaining His truth!

When God said, “neither give place to the devil”, don't you think that by letting yourself be deceived (drawn away) by believing false doctrine is doing exactly that? You gave him access to your mind, and consequently cause to boast to God about his effect on you in leading you to be disloyal to Him.

Do you think that would not be the effect of your false doctrinal beliefs? As an example of what I indicated before as to how serious our responsibility to God is, consider the following scenario. Which involves the Christian's warfare with Satan in his daily life.

A believer who is doctrinally sound, and hopefully otherwise obeying God too, is a prime target of Satan's attacks. And that Christian would normally be on guard and using God's word to resist the devil; thus growing, being victorious, and faithfully serving God.

But a Christian who holds a constitutional wrong belief system, may not be assaulted continually or often by Satan, because he already has him under control, and has rendered him basically ineffective.

Is that not a logical conclusion to come to? A guiding tool, which I discussed in “Disputing the Free Will Concept”, is again helpful here. That is, in the process of studying scriptural subjects: try to determine the scope of its application. First, reduce the principle to its minimum fundamental meaning, and then extend it to its maximum effect. In other words, what is the least it can mean, and what is the most. And then to be careful to stay within those parameters, by not taking the intellectual liberty of having variant opinions, and ideas on the subject.

Item 4 – Logic vs. rationalization:

Simply put, Calvinism or literalism is logical. Arminianism, the free will concept, is illogical.

To the latter, certain doctrinal subjects must be perennial stumbling blocks. Which problem, forces them to either rationalize some subjects or principles, and often ignore or fail to give them proper attention. Because they do not (can not) reconcile with their philosophy.

I imagine they could wish some of the literally clear, strong doctrinal statements of scriptures were not there, or were worded differently to accommodate their rationale.

Put another way, they can't accurately handle the truth, because they are brainwashed (inoculated) with wrong interpretations of gospel doctrine. And until they are willing to commit themselves to an honest examination of their beliefs, they will never get straightened out, and get right with God, accordingly.

It never ceases to baffle me, how practically the entire church is so seriously at odds with the truth of God's word—on the subject of salvation doctrine. They have re-written the script, which rightly understood and advocated as God gave it would be their credentials of true discipleship.

Instead, though I wish I didn't have to use such strong words, they have sold out to the devil, and are fitting subjects of the Rev. 3 prophetic description of their degenerated state. And yet, most of you will continue to gamble that you are not included in that indictment, and be angry at someone like me for daring to say such terrible “unjust” things about fellow Christians.

While I regret bringing such charges against the church, it is not because I fear that I may be wrong, or possibly even defying God. But that the situation is so bad that such extreme criticism is justified and desperately needs to be declared, and heeded.

Item 5 - Study vs. indoctrination:

What makes a Christian fall for a lie, and not stand up for the truth? What happened to cause a Christian to begin his new life with a false concept of important factors of the salvation he possesses?

I started to add: or to go astray later in his life! But I don't think he would go from the truth to

error once the correct belief was established in his heart and mind. Especially would he not be apt to stay in a heterodoxical position if he was well-grounded in the literal truth.

The cause of failure to learn the truth early on, is attributable to not exercising his responsibility to test whatever he heard or read, against the scriptures, until he proved whether it was authentic or not!

While it should be apparent that that is the only logical, safe way to know the truth, we have the precedent and example of the Berean Christians habitually doing exactly that. Acts 17:11.

That should be seen as a timeless, mandatory model for every Christian to follow. Because if God's word is not rendered verbatim, there is always a possibility that the expression of the subject may contain some misinterpretation; innocent or otherwise. For which the proponent, or speaker of it, is nonetheless at fault, and culpable until he corrects it.

In addition to what has been amplified in the foregoing items 1 through 5, and to avoid unnecessary duplication of what has been dealt with elsewhere in the published material (website), I will leave the remaining list (items 6 – 13) for the reader to meditate on what may not be self-explanatory.

The graphic reality of the positive vs. negative differences between the two theological positions should be overwhelmingly convincing of the validity of literal interpretation—to anyone actually open to the truth! The burden of proof is on the Christian for every doctrinal belief he maintains. There are no options, or allowances for significant variances! Why? Because concisely put, the entire revelation of scriptural principles or doctrinal truth is an exact science, of which we are each personally responsible to come to a mutual, unified understanding!