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Calvinism and Arminianism
Comparative Gospel Interpretations

The purpose of this commentary is to show the difference in doctrinal meanings between the Calvinist, and Arminian gospel interpretations, by looking directly at particular verses, pertaining to the subject.

Starting with John 3:16, as the most often quoted and preached example of salvation doctrine, using the Scofield Study Bible, referring to John 3:3, and the Lord's answer to Nicodemus, a Jewish ruler, he was told, "**Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**", and then Scofield's note, "*Regeneration: (1) The necessity of the new birth grows out of the incapacity of the natural man to "see", or "enter" the kingdom of God.*

However gifted, moral, or refined, the natural man is absolutely blind to spiritual truth, and impotent to enter the kingdom, for he can neither obey, understand, nor please God. (2) The new birth is not a reformation of the old nature, but a creative act of the Holy Spirit."

At this point, you would think Scofield was a solid, literal believer, not doubleminded about the gospel, but one of his additional notes removes any doubt that he was, instead, a definite Arminian liberalist, or moderate, at best. To not be an Arminian believer, one must believe all five points of Calvinism, that equates to being a literal, scriptural gospel believer. Which, if tempered by anything extraneous, violates the complete sanctity of gospel doctrine!

The five points are known by the letters in the acronym "TULIP", and are stated briefly, as follows:

T - for total depravity, **U** - for unconditional election, **L** - for limited atonement, **I** - for irresistible grace, and **P** - for perseverance. Scofield, even if he believed in four of the five points, could not be classified as a Calvinist, literal gospel believer, because by stating that one must believe the gospel in order to become a

Christian, he altered, or denied point two, unconditional election.

Because, as revealed by God in His word, in His election of certain persons to be saved, He also foreordained all the means of one becoming a Christian, to be executed by Himself, with no action of man having any effect on the chosen one's spiritual regeneration. "Salvation is of the Lord". Jon. 2:9. That reference, however concise, is a statement of the completely self-acting, independent grace of the Lord in man's salvation!

Scofield's notes are biblically correct interpretations of the true meaning of the doctrine of regeneration (the new birth), but disappointingly, being the universal atonement, free will proponent that he was, he immediately shifted to the typical Arminian concept of the theology, as follows, "(3) The condition of the new birth is faith in Christ crucified." Completely wrong! (4) "Through the new birth the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature, and of the life of Christ, Himself." Correct! But, he apparently could not see the impossibility of the claim of Item (3), which is completely inconsistent with what he so accurately stated in Items (1), and (2).

So, Scofield's, and most of Christianity's belief about the role or place of "faith" in the gospel is erroneous doctrine, along with other tenets of the Arminian concept. When one who was otherwise gifted with the ability to make informative comments on scripture, yet could not distinguish essential gospel truth, from false interpretations of it, it is no wonder that most Christians, who are not faithful students of the word are similarly uninformed of the truth, and easily led into false teaching that may appeal to their natural, man favoring reasoning, but has no spiritual credibility--and, which can only grieve and offend God!

Therefore, while the proclamation of scriptural truth serves and honors God, so does the exposition of false teaching, which God hates! Biblical references to the lying prophets in the Old Testament, shows how much God denounced, and berated them for their corrupt, deceiving, preaching and teaching. One of the meanings of prophecy, especially in New Testament times, is "forthtelling", as in the ministering and witnessing of the gospel. The implication, or application

should be obvious: that every believer of today's misinterpreted gospel is a "lying prophet", or false witness!

Am I saying that God hates you, like He did the O.T. ones? No, He loves you for who you are, because of His mercy and saving grace, but He hates what you are, a disloyal son or daughter, having betrayed Him, by believing a radical perversion of His word.

Why have you not taken heed (to the bible) that what I am saying could be true, and thus shameful conduct for a Christian to be guilty of, or will you go on living with the false security of numbers on your side, and gambling that I am the one who is a heretic, instead of you--without proving it?

I am reminded of a man in the church that I was a member of, who was a student in a class I was teaching, and wanted to read a commentary I had written on the Calvinist vs. Arminian controversy. His reaction, even after studying the article, was that he agreed with me that the Calvinist interpretation was more doctrinally logical, but that he couldn't commit himself to make such a change in his beliefs, or position. Could that be like you?

That was disappointing to me, especially coming from an otherwise thoughtful, and conscientious believer. I wonder how many Christians have reacted similarly to the issue, and are either complacent, or afraid of having to subject themselves to learning something very different than what they have always believed. If so, it is proof again that they are not thinking with spiritually renewed minds, but with the same old natural intellect.

Worse still, is the fundamental naive assumption, that God would keep Christians from making a devastating doctrinal mistake, that could turn the church into the dishonorable, unspiritual, and unfaithful organization, that Calvinists have proven it to be.

Those are my words, but they are far less severe than the Lord's message to the end-time church (which is us) that, ".....thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Why, essentially?

Because they (most of you) have not believed His gospel, but followed the voice of Satan, and pastors, evangelists, and missionaries, etc., who corrupted His word, and "prophesied (forthtold) out of their own hearts" (Ezek. 13:2), and foolish minds.

It isn't unique to me, in principle, but the Lord gave me a very valuable guiding rule to follow in the study, and interpretation of scripture. That is, to "Reduce everything to its minimum, and extend it to its maximum." In other words, what is the least it means, and what is the most, and to stay within those limits.

How does that work, practically? It can help us to examine a scripture carefully, and to avoid premature, or superficial determinations. For example, looking at John 3:16, it says, first of all, that God loved the "world". That is a fact, in itself, but is not self-explanatory, unless the word "world" always means all mankind.

But, since no one can dispute that there are various possible meanings for the "world", it is subject to the rule of context. to establish the particular use of "world" that the author meant. And this is where the poor scholarship of the Arminian proponents should be glaringly evident, even to them! Instead, it strongly suggests an intentional disregard of ethics, along with their use of whatever tactics that could be used to falsely "justify the end" desired (believing what they want to believe).

The rule of interpretation noted, was improperly used, because the AG believers applied the meaning of "world" arbitrarily to their desired, or assumed end. It's like they didn't give it an honest, thorough look. Anyway, it is an inexcusable violation of the scriptural mandate to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (discerning) the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15.

Whereas, the correct application of the word "world", is determined by who Jesus was speaking about. Since it is a known historical fact, that the Jews customarily referred to the Gentiles as the "world" (even derisively, as heathens), so would God use the familiar name for them, in telling Nicodemus that salvation

was being extended to the Gentiles, as well as Israel.

Taking the rule a step further, in considering the phrase in the verse, that "whosoever believeth in him (God) should not perish, but have everlasting life", we are faced with another Arminian misapplication of the salvation factor, "believeth".

In the verse in question, being a believer is a condition required to escape the condemnation of hell, and enter heaven. The Phillipian jailor, fearing divine judgment, was not asking what he must do to become a Christian, but what he must do to be "saved" from condemnation to hell.

Consideration must be given to the grammatical basic meanings of words in formulating doctrine, as with any literary composition. Let words have their true variant meanings, and effects, according to context, and logical interpretation, and not force them to mean something that the author (particularly God) did not intend. Tampering with any truth is bad enough, but conforming biblical doctrine to fit wrongly biased, or predisposed thinking, is unconscionable and disloyal handling of God's holy writing! Lest anyone misses the inference, that is largely what most Christians have done, or have been party to, in their alliance with an adulterated interpretation of the gospel.

While, it is right to say that one is effectively saved, when converted to a Christian, actual salvation (in the sense of escape, or rescue) is a future event, and since "whosoever believeth" is linked to that eventuality, there is no justification for backing it up, and making it (believing) a prerequisite condition for becoming a Christian. Because, there is no biblical credence in the Arminian, "free will" idea that man has the innate ability, or responsibility to "believe" the gospel, which is a spiritual truth that natural man cannot understand, per 1 Cor. 2:11-14, etc.

I have said before, that just because I am in a small minority position for my literal gospel belief, it does not make me wrong, because the truth stands on its own credibility, whether only one person believes it, or millions! In other words, a doctrinal interpretation is not the truth because everybody believes it.

That is only consensus, which without proof has no validity, or true value. It may have highly convincing weight of opinion, and influence to the natural, unspiritual mind, but God's gospel or any other doctrine is not subject to theological opinion, or theory. And, therefore, we are to seek the complete true meaning for each particular doctrine, that God intended all Christians to learn and be united in. Any interpretation that is at variance with the specific declared meaning of it, is erroneous, and unacceptable to God! To which criterion, there are no exceptions.

Having made those preparatory comments, I would like to refer to various gospel principles, and compare the contrasting Calvinist and Arminian beliefs of those scriptural references, and ask for objective consideration of their credibility, because that will prove that only the Calvinistic gospel doctrine can rightly be called the truth according to God vs. the contradictory assumptions of Arminian believers, which they dare to call the gospel of Jesus Christ, but, for which he would have nothing but contempt!

The sum and substance of each comparative answer, or interpretation will be (1) biblical fact vs. theory, (2) truth vs. fabrication, (3) knowledge vs. assumption, (4) Spirit vs. flesh, (5) logic vs. rationalization, (6) conviction vs. consensus, and (7) doctrinal integrity vs. infidelity. The first classification in each item denotes the Calvinist true gospel interpretation vs. the Arminian false gospel concept.

In summary, it is **God vs. man**! Yes, it is that simple, and decisive! If there are any minor technicalities, or imperfections, they are insignificant to question the essential truth of the Calvinist conclusions. The latter statement, if disagreed with, is open to objective study and analysis, because as with the entire C/A controversy, truth will stand all the scrutiny and examination which may be honestly employed, while error can be determined and exposed, to validate and certify scriptural truth.

Even relatively plausible misinterpretations will not stand the test of "rightly" dividing the word of truth"! Therefore, no Arminian gospel believer has "rightly" determined whether his beliefs are true, because if he "spiritually"

studied gospel doctrine, he would eventually come to the literal truth of the scriptural gospel, and not ever settle, or be deceived by Satan's and man's manipulation and corruption of God's word, on that or any other biblical revelation.

Starting with the classic declaration of salvation in John 3:16, that "God so loved the world", it is assumed by the liberalized gospel believers, that it means everyone on earth may be saved. But, they give no consideration or allowance for other meanings of the word "world", and in such vein, no thought of context, or cultural, geographical, historical, racial, prophetic, or other possible extenuating circumstance, or factor! Which is very poor, even dishonest scholarship.

The root cause of their false theology, is that their assumptions and conclusions are determined by their old, unspiritual natures! Which makes them virtually no more able to discern biblical truths than a natural, unconverted man, who is void of any spiritual faculty, or ability.

A comparison of the opposing interpretations of the verse in question, follows the quotation of it.

John 3:16:

" 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".

Calvinist

1. "World" = Gentiles, in context of Jesus speaking to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jewish people, who customarily called the Gentiles the "world". The Lord was telling him that salvation had been extended to elect Gentiles.
2. Whosoever" that God makes a believer, shall not perish.

Arminian

1. "World" = all mankind, whom Christ died for, and are eligible for salvation. No other meanings of the word "world" are considered. Assumption: God loves everyone, even in their natural, sinful state.
2. "Whosoever" believes the gospel, thereby becoming a Christian, shall not

perish.

What is the effect of the foregoing comparison? Probably the saddest, most hopeless thing about the whole Arminian concept is that as scripturally wrong as the premise is, that its vast majority of believers don't know it's wrong, and won't concede an inch to the Calvinist theology on the subject, even though it completely reflects the meaning of the literal, scriptural gospel.

It has been my experience that once the essential truth, that is, the factual knowledge of any subject has been learned, no assumed difference in any important particular--however widely accepted and established--if objectively, and fully examined can ever refute that truth, or prove it wrong.

In a secular, or non-biblical vein, Rush Limbaugh, in discussing debate, argument, etc., said words to the effect, that anyone who thoroughly knows the truth of the subject he is involved with, has nothing to fear, but should have complete confidence in being well informed in his position, so that he can speak knowledgeably, even authoritatively about the matter.

Will Rogers said that he "would rather be right than President". That statement, if sincerely meant in principle, should be a guiding moral, and ethical desire, and objective in everyone's life, and not simply idealistic, but as achievable as humanly possible. And, of course, at least in spiritual matters, only a conscientious Christian can be successful in that aspiration.

While, with the temporary burden of our old nature hindering us, or as Paul said, "the body (or remains) of this death" (as in Rom. 7:24), we are limited in how much we can accomplish--no excuse will ever suffice for failing to correctly learn and uphold the precious God-ordained and executed principles of the gospel, which, whether we know the truth of it, or not, is the doctrinal foundation of our Christian life. That is, we are saved by the real gospel, not man's twisted version of it!

In a human setting, ignorance of one's heritage, and personal, family and national history is irresponsible. But, not to know the facts of one's salvation is far

worse, and characterizes, and stigmatizes most of the universal church, as **having departed from the faith** (the basic spiritual life-giving principles of the church). And what is left of the church, is just a shell of the living organism that embodies Christ's spiritual nature, having forsaken Christ's headship of the "body".

I am sure most of you think I have no right, or leading from God, to make such strong accusations against you. But, the situation is so serious, and seemingly (even prophetically) incorrigible that though they are are offended, they are fully guilty of the charges, and their objections and resentment can only come from their old nature, which they have failed to recognize, and repent from, and be reformed.

Unwittingly, or not, they make themselves targets of attack by espousing and trying to defend their illogical gospel fabrication; the latter word suggesting a "fabric" full of holes. When Christians show stubborn resistance, and refusal to listen to a brother, or faction of the church who claim to know the truth about a conflict of doctrine, etc., they are again exhibiting their fleshly unspiritual thinking, and practically unapproachable attitudes, arising from it. Whereas, in a brotherhood of Christians, they are supposed to be willing and open, not only to question, but if deserved, criticism and rebuke. **"Open rebuke is better than secret love"**. Prov. 27:5. How many Christians live up to that principle?

I understand how nobody wants to be accused of faults, and are more apt to react defensively or hostile to it than to accept it without objection, or retaliation. I know that I have been "touchy" about criticism of myself all my life, especially if it is undeserved. Though I have been able to overcome it many times, I still fail at it sometimes, either openly or inwardly.

But, the bible instructs and teaches us (if we let it) to learn how to love each other--not only when it is comparatively easy, but under all circumstances, by God's grace and Spirit. That is admittedly a tough assignment, given how we probably all have had insincere, and doubleminded (two-faced) relationships in the world, whether with family, friends, fellow workers, or other associations.

And, God doesn't expect us to be perfect, only Jesus can be, and is! But, if we

are aware of our shortcomings, and "old man" faults, and offenses. and are trying conscientiously to overcome those ways, He will accept our earnest efforts, and approve of our conduct.

And, then, we will be in the place of obedience and reverence, so that He can bless us, and empower us, as He has promised. Cooperating with God, by knowing His will as much as reasonably possible, and doing what He asks and expects, is surely a definition of faithfulness, which is what our relationship with God must be. Are we not on this earth, primarily to live for God, in every way that would serve and honor Him, thus also fulfilling the hopes, and aspirations of our own lives?

But, how can a Christian, who is part of a bloc of possibly 95% of the total world church, ever meet those essential requirements of loyalty, and acceptable behavior and works, if he has aligned himself with false gospel theology, having thereby departed from the very principles, and actions by which God redeemed him?

What is the source of your beliefs? Those of you who are in that category assume it is God, and His word. But, God is not the "author of confusion". Satan, and man are! Therefore, no matter how many times you falsely assure yourselves that you are right in your understanding of the gospel, you are, instead, **woefully deceived and deluded**.

You did not let God's word teach you the truth of your salvation. You followed another voice, and false guide down the garden path of doctrinal error and destruction. In that connection, you never were taught, or ever learned the difference between "walking in the flesh, and the Spirit".

Which means, you wouldn't be in error, and out of fellowship with God, if you had lived and acted by the principle of **"walking in the Spirit"**, with God, and not by the dictates of your natural, unspiritual faculties, which are subject to the "law of sin and death", from which you have been positionally delivered. Rom. 8:2. That is, "made free" without conditions, eternally; and potentially, in the earthly aspect of that deliverance--subject to obedience, and faithful conduct! That is,

conditional freedom, on those terms.

Continuing with the selection of scriptural verses dealing with the C/A comparative interpretations of the gospel, John 5:39-40 says, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have eternal life". No matter how much it may sound like it, that statement does not contradict the principle, or decree of predestination, or election.

The fact that Jesus explained to the Jews (through the chief priests, scribes, and elders) that they would not come to Him for eternal life, does not mean they could have, but it was spoken to show the reason they would not come to Him, is because they trusted in their unspiritual conformance to religious laws, and rites. It was proof of their non-elect, condemned status, and the futility of trying to obtain salvation by attempted legal adherence to the scriptures.

The typical Arminian misinterpretation of that verse is that the Jews in question could be saved, but would not submit to God for the assumed universal availability of salvation. Which is just more of the same premise of false teaching of how salvation works, and their being "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth". (An application of the result of 2 Tim. 3:7).

John 6:44 tells us that, " **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him**". Now, how does the Arminian belief of universal salvation opportunity agree with that scriptural factor? They may think that is simple. Either God draws everyone, or all those who would believe, and that it is up to them to either believe, or reject the gospel "invitation".

Which, erroneously hinges on the mistaken premise that belief, or faith precedes regeneration, or the new birth! And, then, it necessarily follows that all related gospel doctrine must be either correspondingly misinterpreted, or "adapted" (forced) to fit the mold.

But, the "drawing" is instead, a predestinated, irresistible act of God, whereby Jesus said, "**All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh**

to me I will in no wise cast out". John 6:37. They are drawn to a certain redemption, not just the possibility of it (dependent upon man's cooperative agreement). Furthermore, as the scripture quoted says, the elect are gifts from the Father to the Son.

And, how special that is compared to an unspecific, merely "possible" occurrence! As if God would leave man's eternal salvation to chance. No matter who is, or is not included in God's plan of salvation, it is His sovereign prerogative, whether to show mercy, when man's sinfulness deserves eternal judgment. But, He would not allow any action of His, to be subject to mentally and morally depraved man's decision.

An Arminian interpretation of another verse, Rom. 1:16, will show the subtle effect of their specious theology. The scripture reads, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God, unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek

When the free will, pre-conversion faith proponents see words relating to "salvation", such as "gospel", and "believeth", they automatically assume that both the message of the gospel, and positive response to it, must precede the new birth, when in fact any spiritual decision or action of man cannot happen until he is regenerated with the Spirit of God.

Otherwise, the typical Christian contradicts even simple logic, by saying in effect, that one has to believe, in order to become a believer! And, if that is not ridiculous enough, it is just one example of the confusion of principles in the Arminian perverted gospel theology. The concept is riddled with errors, and has been thoroughly refuted, for the false gospel doctrine that it is, yet its "foolish" followers, as the Apostle Paul would call them (Gal. 5:1), that being most all of you, go on in delusion, indoctrinated with the devil's lies, the blind adoption of which has historically caused mass unfaithfulness, and degeneration in the church.

The next scripture to look at is 1 Cor. 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned". Verses 10-16 of the chapter

contains the most defining biblical explanation of who can "believe" and who cannot. The line between natural man, and spiritual man is therein drawn and it cannot be crossed! In fact, it technically destroys the whole "free will" philosophy of natural man having the ability to believe the gospel. No rationalization, or any variation of the governing principle cited, can rightfully ever be called anything less than a radical misinterpretation of faith related doctrine.

Certainly, no heartfelt conviction of scriptural truth can ever be possible to a Christian who only uses his natural intellect (his "old nature") to determine doctrinal meanings, no matter how otherwise intelligent and learned he may be. That is the kind of Christian thinking and acting, that has gotten the church into the fallen, unspiritual condition that it is in today.

The lifeblood of the church is the Spirit of God, which (who) dwells in its members. What is He in us for? Among many things that could be stated, one of his ministries to us is to be "a Guide", or a "lamp unto our feet" Does He automatically lead us, or do we have to voluntarily follow the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:16 says we are to "walk after the Spirit". And, then, as in John 16:13, "He, the Spirit, will guide you into all truth".

Does it not follow, then, that if the church of many centuries now, had actually depended on the Spirit to lead them, that they would know the true gospel, and the universal body of Christ (His church) would not be the largely unspiritual, and unfaithful organization that it predominantly is today? "Walking in the flesh", or living by the reasoning of the "old" nature, can only produce unacceptable works of its own kind! So, conversely, does "walking in the Spirit" bear fruit of its own kind, which is spiritual.

In chapter 15 of First Corinthians, a commonly misapplied reference to Christ's death, needs to be clarified. It is another instance of the effect of bad theology. That being, the idea of the universal application of gospel language, that is really not written to the world in general, but to Christians.

Therefore, Paul is talking to the Corinthian Church, in verse 15:3, stating, ".....how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures". That is for

those there who were born again", and those yet to be. It should be obvious that church truth has no application to the unregenerate. The language is spiritual, which is unrelated, or foreign to, them.

Eph. 2:8, is another tyypical misassumption of the word "saved", as meaning the same as "born again", or becoming a Christian, and that "faith" is the means by which it happens! Whereas, faith is a faculty of the Spirit, which is received at the time of regeneration, and is the inner principle by which a Christian knows, and believes, or trusts God.

If one at least acknowledges that the word "saved" essentially means "deliverance", or "rescue" from some impending, or eventual danger, which in the matter at hand is condemnation to hell, then the verse in question can be correctly understood as it is literally rendered--that by the grace of God, who directly makes us Christians, i.e., partakers of faith, we will escape hell, and enter heaven.

And, it is all a "gift of God" (and not an offered gift that must be accepted, but a fulfilled gift, that is irresistible) executed entirely by God, independent of any human action, including the mistaken contention that man can, or must exercise saving faith, in order to become a Christian.

Sometimes I can hardly believe that Christians would be at odds with God, pitting their feeble doctrinal arguments against His exalted word, which He says will abide forever! And what will be the duration of man's differing word? The same as all other "wood, hay, and stubble". I realize that all the deceived believers involved in this gospel controversy, are not consciously, or intentionally disobeying, or defying God.

But, if ignorance of civil laws is not an excuse for lawbreakers, who are responsible to know the laws that regulate their lives, then it is right, and even more important that Christians obey the requirements that God makes about His word. Which is, primarily, that believers study to learn the truths that He has established for their knowledge, and edification.

Not being faithful in the way of life that God has designed for us, is far worse than a citizen disobeying civil laws. Unfaithfulness to His word is betraying a trust that God has given us to honor, and keep! And, then, it is compounded by listening to false teaching, which, if not done purposely, has the same effect, and is just as much a breach of responsibility and loyalty, whether it is done ignorantly, or irresponsibly.

2 Thess. 2:13, gives the order of factors of salvation, as election, regeneration, and faith. "Because God hath from the beginning (1) chosen you to salvation, (2) through sanctification of the Spirit (or regeneration), and (3) belief of the truth". Note, that there is no way to place the third factor before the second! Yet, that is what the Arminian believers insist on doing, without logic, proof, or authority.

Of course, those latter things would make their "simplified" gospel theology too complicated, and difficult to make sense of, which would be too ethical and principled for them. That may sound facetious, but there is more truth to it than they dare to face, which is evident by their unbending refusal to openly and objectively consider the merits of the Calvinistic literal gospel position. It is as if they are saying, "don't bother me with the facts, my mind is made up".

At this point, it would be well to consider whether the problem of opposite gospel beliefs, historically, within the church in general, has been dealt with properly. I am referring to what constitutes heresy, as being more serious than divisions or schisms, which would be more apt to occur, and for different degrees of disagreement, or discord.

Titus 3:10 says, "A man that is a heretick after the first and second admonition reject". And, Matt. 18:17, on discipline in the church, after defining the procedure for going to a brother who trespasses against another, adds, "And if he shall neglect to hear them (the offended brother, and two or three witnesses), tell it unto the church: but if neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican".

A heretic, is one that goes against particular doctrine of the church, and usually separates himself from that church; either drawing away those he convinces of his

dissenting beliefs, or by luring others outside of that church. And, after every means has been used to try to recover him, fails, then he is to be openly exposed and castigated, separated from personally, disallowed communion, and expelled from the assembly, after due process.

God has instituted procedures in His word for the churches to deal with problems that would cause disorder and harm, because human nature being what it is, there is always something to cause disagreement, or discord, etc., requiring some kind corrective or disciplinary action. Because, problems unsettled, can easily affect a church's spiritual health, and become divisive, and schismatic.

The whole gospel controversy, which has undermined the church for most of its history, started in the second and third century by the introduction of dissent against the traditional, true gospel by a monk and theologian, named Pelagius. His liberal views should have been seen for the serious attack against the word of God, that it was, and Pelagius should have been almost immediately expelled from the assembly, if he did not recant from his heretical teachings.

But, that didn't happen, so that over time other detractors, defectors, and remonstrants joined the infiltration of the churches, until liberal gospel figures such as Arminius, Wesley, and the like, continued to indoctrinate the churches with false teaching, producing followers that are the rank and file of most churches worldwide today.

And, no matter how highly regarded, and successful their famous televangelists, etc., are, they are in reality, nothing more than heretical purveyors, and merchants of false gospel propaganda, parading and masquerading as genuine, faithful ministers and witnesses of gospel truth.

The "tares", or false members that are sown in the churches by that kind of evangelism are to be left alone for the Lord to judge later, so that turmoil won't be created in the churches, by the difficulty of not knowing who may be tares, and not being able to properly deal with the confusion and uncertainty.

An example of overly simplistic minimalization of serious doctrinal principles,

can be seen in a statement made by an Arminian pastor and commentator, paraphrased, that the "offer" of salvation is as real and sincere as someone offering "candy" to a child, who simply has to accept it. This same, self-appointed "gospel" authority, decries so-called easy-believism, and other neo-evangelical ideas, and methods, but in this case, and many others, projects the same Santa Claus imagery of God!

Anyway, unlike the scriptural admonition of leaving the tares alone, the churches are responsible to deal with heresy, to honor the Lord, and protect themselves from corruption, and degeneration. But, how can the contemporary universal church carry out that essential duty, when they are the heretical ones? It reminds me of the quotation from some historical conflict, where someone said, "We have met the enemy, and it us". Where, in the church case, ironically, error calls truth a liar, or heterodoxy accuses orthodoxy of heresy. The situation can't get much more convoluted than that.

Therefore, the present church situation is different, because at least in some instances, where heresy was introduced into churches, it was not dealt with as the leaven of false doctrine, necessitating disciplinary action. So, today, instead of having a particular heretic within an assembly, most churches are filled with the proliferation over centuries of heretics, or heterodox believers, who refuse to hear of their gospel infidelity--and, instead, regard whoever may approach them with the truth of their deviant theology, as heretics, themselves.

And, then, it is coupled with the incalculable number of tares, or false professors that have been added to the churches, as a result of the liberalized, or pseudo-gospel of Arminianism, with its misguided hyper-evangelism, i.e., psychological methodology incorporating emotional appeals, fear-mongering, drama, gimmickry, sensationalism, or practically anything to attract, and maintain attention and interest.

They will deny relying on ideas, and ingenuity, etc., but they will use about anything imaginable to serve their liberal gospel concept, based on their misguided, free will, universal atonement premise. That philosophy is inherently

driven by the methodology of "the end justifying the means", and when the end is "possible" salvation for anyone, what restraint, or limitation can be placed upon their belief of such a noble, eternally critical objective?

The combination of Arminian Christians, whose form of the gospel is conceived by the "flesh", not the "Spirit", and the resulting unknown number of unconverted professors, makes for a mainly unspiritual church. As such, it is not capable of operating, or functioning in the faithful manner exemplified by the first church at Jerusalem, who ".....continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers". Acts 2:42.

Note that the "apostles' doctrine" is the first thing listed, because it is the most important thing, but, today's churches could not claim that obedience, because they are followers of a completely defective gospel, which is the heresy we have been discussing. Yet, somehow, they (nearly all of Christianity) don't think they are guilty of such an egregious, unfaithful misinterpretation of God's word, for which there is no excuse, or plea of innocence acceptable--but, only the dire need of repentance, and reformation.

When I said above, in effect, that the Arminian gospel is the result of unfaithful misinterpretation of the doctrine, the fault is really worse than that! It seems that most Christians are not much committed to study the word themselves, but want shortcuts to knowledge, and assume that their pastor must be right, and reliable, so they take his word for what he teaches.

Which should only work long enough to go home, and do what the Berean Christians did, "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things (they were taught) were so". Acts 17:1. Is that just a good idea, and example, or shouldn't it be a rule for every believer to follow, without exception?

It must be established in our minds, that a pastor, bible teacher, etc., is responsible for what he teaches, but we are responsible for what we learn, or believe! So, if at the Judgment Seat of Christ, we have not corrected, or reformed errors in our beliefs, we can't say, "But, Lord, that is what we were taught, and

almost everybody believed".

There will be "weeping, and gnashing of teeth", to borrow a phrase from Matt. 8:12, applying to the judgment of unregenerate "children of the kingdom". So, for Arminian believers, who have been the typical Christians, throughout most of the church's history, there will not be the commendation and reward of, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant", but, the censure and reproof of: "Shamefully done, thou disobedient, unfaithful servant".

To adapt the Old Testament, notorious offensive act, committed by Esau selling his birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25:31), most Christians have given up their spiritual birthright, for the "mess of pottage", or perverted gospel doctrine that Satan uses to lure believers away from God's truth.

What could be more pitiful, and helpless than for a Christian to have the innate power within himself, to escape from the captivity of doctrinal bondage that he is in--but, will not use his God-given resources to break free, by repenting from it, and reforming his gospel beliefs.

Of course, the truth he never learned has been, in terms of a well known expression, "right in front of his eyes, all the time". Think, if you will, how many statements of gospel principles there are in the scriptures, which most Christians who capitulated to the adulterated Arminian gospel concept, did not see the truth of--because they tried to live the Christian life in the flesh, or their old unspiritual natures.

It may sound repetitious, but so is the endless propagation of the Arminian entrenched false gospel theme, throughout the universal church, and its outreach ministries. Besides, someone has said, "repetition is the mucilage of theology", whether it is good indoctrination, or bad!

What I want to re-emphasize is the vital significance and importance of what may appear to be a simple reminder of something that Christians assume they do anyway, because they are indwelt with the Spirit of God. But, that is a serious misunderstanding of what it really means to "walk in the Spirit", because the

principle is not properly studied, like many more doctrinal subjects.

Many, or most Christians don't get much beyond the "milk" of the word, which is for babes, or new believers, whereas the "meat" of the word is for mature Christians, to continue to develop and grow in knowledge and wisdom. Since the church in general is unspiritual, because of unfaithfulness, what, then, is the primary cause of that condition?

As I have repeatedly said, or inferred throughout this commentary, the reason is failing to "walk (think and act) in the Spirit" vs. living in the "flesh", or mainly by one's natural faculties, which a Christian still possesses, along with his new spiritual nature. And, God doesn't just tell us to do something in a few key words, but explains the necessity of it, and the way to accomplish it.

If a Christian does not realize that there are two competing natures within him, and a lifelong strife between them, then likely the old man's ways will continue to characterize his life! Gal. 5:16-25, gives a good explanation of the imperative need to know how to walk in the newness of life within us.

Verse 16 says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh". The first thing to note is that we are told that we must do something, before we can have the result specified, and promised. Verse 16 coupled with verse 25, both emphasize the necessity to consciously take spiritual "steps", to avoid doing everything like we always did, in our own natural ability and strength, even if it is a spiritual thing that we are trying to do, but which can never work.

There is no automatic, or instinctive tendency to act spiritually, rather than naturally, unless and until you have had the experience for some time of purposely doing it, which will tend to make the practice become second nature. Once that habit is repeated enough, it will prove its efficacy (that is, the "power to produce desired results).

And, having thus "walked in the Spirit", with God, it is doubtful if you will ever lapse back to "walking in the flesh", without being conscious of it, and turning again to living by your new, spiritual nature. Then, scriptures like Eph. 4:22-24 will be personally meaningful to you, that says, ".....put off concerning the former

conversation (behavior, or life) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness".

The latter two precious possessions, which are Christ's righteousness and holiness, are imputed to us, and cannot be lived up to by operating on the life principle of our old nature. Only by intentionally yielding to the indwelling Spirit of God, can we do anything acceptable to God, which will edify us, and help make us faithful disciples of the Lord.

I did not always understand the absolute necessity of making sure that I "walk in the Spirit" because it requires more attention to learning it, than I was giving it. And, even though I know what it means now, I have to continually be aware of the two-nature conflict that is always going on, and as many times as may be required even each day, to commit myself to the Lord, by prayer, and claiming, and following the guidance of related scriptures, including the need of often resisting the devil, because he never lets up trying to tempt us to disobey God. It is his vengeful, consuming mission, in which he has been devastatingly successful, to the church's shame!

Purposely, trying to obey and honor the Lord (in the Spirit) does work, of course, giving us peace and assurance that we are doing the right thing. There is a bible verse that says, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts", which has the sense of the peace of God "refereeing" the battle between our old, and new natures.

If our devotion to God's will is that sincere and serious, He will give us the victory that His word promises. And, we will have the spiritual strength that we need, to endure whatever trials and tribulations we may encounter. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might". Eph. 6:10. And, "My grace is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect in weakness". 2 Cor. 12:9.

Addendum:

A Brief Summary of Church History
Applicable to Gospel Doctrine

1. The original church at Jerusalem, had the following faithful testimony, per Acts 2:41-47, (a) they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine", which was (a) the literal gospel received directly from the Lord, and recorded intact, (b) they were united in fellowship with the Lord, the apostles, and each other, (c) wonders and signs were done by the apostles, which would be done today by the Lord, if the church was faithful like the early church, (d) under persecution, (1) they held all things in common, and (2) sold their possessions and goods, and gave to all according to their need.

We should not be unduly influenced by the incentive of persecution, as strong as the motivation to faithfulness that it is; it should not be the only reason for a church's unity, and loyalty. Love for the Lord, and willing obedience to His will are more honorable, and personally commendable than any other reason!

Note: Christians today might think they would do the same thing as item (d), under the circumstances of serious persecution, but a mistaken comparison might be made, which should be a very sobering, sad thing to realize. That is, (1) that there wouldn't any real reason for the persecution of an unfaithful, unspiritual church, and (2) Christians who have forsaken the Lord and His gospel. could hardly be expected to make any real sacrifices in their mainly "fleshly" way of life. In fact, there is not one of the distinctions made about the original church, that could be said of the typical modern-day church.

Which all, is equivalent to the writing of "Ichabod" over the door of nearly every church in the world, meaning "The glory of the Lord has departed." A reference to which, is Rev. 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, etc.", which shows the exclusion of Christ from the church, whose true and glorious gospel they corrupted.

The setting is a typical end-time church, the subject being their unfaithful, degenerate condition--not the exaggerated, preposterous Arminian idea of the Lord pleading with the world to accept Him, and the "gospel", to be used as an

evangelistic example. The truth being that the Lord's meaning is like the appeal (actually more of a warning) at the end of each of the messages to the seven particular church failures, culminating with the final Laodicean, worst case scenario.

Referring to 1 Sam. 4:21, when the ark of God was taken from the tabernacle by the Philistines, the name Ichabod was given to Phinehas, Eli's daughter-in-law's baby, which meant the "glory of the Lord is departed from Israel". The ark of the tabernacle contained the word of God--in the "holy of holies".

In the New Testament, the "glory of the Lord" is the Lord of the church, who is also called the "Word". The ark of the covenant was stolen, removing the symbol of the glory of the Lord. The glory of the church (The Lord Jesus Christ) was rejected by the church, in their turning to a false teaching of the word, the gospel; the church thus breaking fellowship with the Lord, and adopting a form of idolatry, or worshipping another God, in effect!

Picking up again, from Page 1, item (e) of the factors noted in Acts 2:41-47 about the original church at Jerusalem, they also continued daily with one accord, in the temple, breaking bread from house to house, eating with gladness, and singleness of heart, and (f) praising God, and having favor with all the people, which is especially noteworthy. And, finally, (g) The Lord added to the church daily such as should be (were) saved (elect ones, directly and independently, by Him alone).

2. The advent of liberalized false gospel teaching, introduced by a monk and theologian named Pelagius, who would be the present-day believers' doctrinal ancestor, makes for a corrupt gospel heritage for nearly every contemporary church in the world today.

That means, lest you miss the critical significance of that point of defection from the true gospel, that most every Christian today cannot trace their form of the gospel back to the beginning of the church, but only as far back as the onset of "departure from the faith", and which has degenerated into the unspiritual, and

disloyal church organizations rampant throughout Christianity today.

Their false gospel cannot be ascribed to the faithful first church--because, they would have fully dealt with any deviant or heretical teaching they might have been confronted with. And, there is a remnant today also, who would not countenance erroneous, or unsound doctrine, because God always has a faithful contingent, whether sometimes preserved by Him, as with Israel, or true faithfulness of those who follow and obey the word of God, voluntarily, in response to His will, and the principles He has established in the scriptures.

The contrasting comparison between the original model church, and the fallen modern church, is that the latter has been in spiritual decline for as much eighteen hundred years, with the exception of a nominal resurgence of gospel truth during the reformation era. Yet, there has been a faithful remnant of true believers, that has always existed to one degree, or another.

Today's Christianity is a religious empire, built upon a false gospel base, whose proponents continue to be deceived by the devil's scheme, and their own gullibility and disobedience to the Lord, to believe it, without even trying to examine and prove whether it is scripturally true or false.

Therefore, if a description of a typical church today was to be written on the subjects stated in Acts 2:41-47, it would read as follows:

"And they (the Arminian Christians) continued steadfastly in the heretics gospel, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers" (which if they relate to salvation, are uttered in vain, because God will have nothing to do with false doctrine, but to judge it--if not now, then at the Judgment Seat of Christ, when they will learn that they spent their Christian life "playing church", according to their own gospel script--not God's!

It is ironic that Christians can recognize the world's religions as cults, and sects, and all manner of "churches" that are void of the Spirit of God, and only organizations of unregenerate mankind. While those that are the overwhelming majority of actual Christians today, are guilty of misinterpreting, and thus misrepresenting the true gospel that God established in His word, and by which He

redeems His elect, upon the integral principles which He instituted for the body of Christ, to be the repository of His glory during the dispensation of the church age.

And, in their ignorance and delusion, most of the church perennially thinks it is fundamentally sound, and generally faithful to the Lord. While, in truth, they remain "departed from the faith" of the fathers, and the doctrine of the apostles, and have gone astray, after a God of their own image! Furthermore, any form of defection from doctrinal truth, and adoption of a different meaning of it, is a form of idolatry!

Continuing with the antithetical Arminian status quo vs. the original church account in Acts 2:41-47, verse 43 would read as follows, "And no fear came upon souls, because no wonders and signs were done by the Lord--because God is not with them in their unfaithful state!

On verses 44-45, the modern church is not under serious persecution like the early churches were, because ironically in their unspiritual condition, they wouldn't be worthy of attack for their testimony and works. Revising verse 46, accordingly, it would read, "And they continuing weekly (vs. daily), with one accord (that is, consensual agreement in a false gospel), and in breaking of bread, occasionally, did eat their meat with misplaced gladness, and misguided singleness of heart (whether socially, or spiritually).

An Arminian rendering of vs. 47, would say, "Praising God" for a mixture of (1) things God is worthy of, but (2) for things assumed by the Arminian gospel believers' duplicitous theology, which are not His works, and then, "having favor with the people, in general" (practically free from persecution, until a recent development of increased cultural, and political changes).

And, the last part of verse 47, states that it is the Lord, "who added to the church daily, such as should be saved". Note, that it is exclusively God, who alone executes His plan of salvation of those He has designated to be redeemed, and they without merit, become Christians without any human action required.

