**“What is Calvinism? What Has Been Its Consistent Fruits?”**

 The rotten fruit of Calvinism is self-evidently damning: every congregation where Calvinism comes in where it was not before, it splits that church.

If that is not enough to persuade you away from this destructive doctrine, read on.

In short, Calvinism has caused these disputes because at its core Calvinism means that God alone chooses some to salvation – the rest are damned by default.

 So, it is easy to see where the controversy is – Calvinism takes away from man his effective choice in the matter of salvation. If he’s saved, it’s because God willed him to be; if he’s damned, it’s because God did not will him into salvation. Man has no effective choice in the situation, even if he has the illusion of choice, or a theoretical-but-never-going-to-happen “choice”.

 Clearly Calvinism is an inherently-depressing viewpoint for most people: what is the point then of witnessing, praying for, or hoping for another’s salvation, when it is ultimately out of anyone’s hands but God’s? If only He chooses, do we obey the above simply out of a blind obedience, with no end purpose or motivation in mind? Is such obedience sustainable?

 Calvinists do offer their defenses. Their “logical” defense is they do not believe that man lacks the ability to choose God; instead, they uniformly defend that no man wills to be saved. Otherwise, man has free will, but his free will never chooses God. Ex de facto, man is damned unless God changes his free will to “freely” choose him.

 There is undeniably a host of individual Scriptures, out of different Bible books – written by different authors – in different time periods, writing to different audiences – in otherwise completely-different contexts – that look like they support some of these ideas, especially when thrown together to form an entirely-new, independent theology. The invitation of a Calvinist is to take all these verses and mesh them together and make them all “fit”. This makes sense on the surface, but then why did God put all those different verses in all those different books written in different time periods to different audiences? Because they are not meant to mesh together in one big ball; they are meant to be understood only in their original context. They make sense together doctrinally, as we understand the Bible as a whole (2 Timothy 3:16). They are not to be rearranged and mashed together conveniently to become the new “Gospel of Calvin”.

 I will admit this requires a great deal of Bible study to be done, as any “argument” towards or against any controversial doctrine is either going to involve a lot of proof-texting (as the example above) or sincere, lengthy Bible study that sorts these ideas out individually – in their own contexts – and then brings together the Bible story as a whole. Below I have inevitably quoted Scriptures, but the difference is I do not advocate meshing them together in one new theology. Instead, read each verse in its own context, and conclude what the original audience would have, and then add all those ideas together to get the full picture of the Bible. Calvinism (as other false doctrines do) suggests that we mesh bunches of verses together to form a new text all its own. This difference is profound in understanding truth in any teaching.

 Calvinists’ chief mistake is confusing God’s sovereignty with absolution. God is sovereign, but He has voluntarily surrendered a measure of that sovereignty so that we can have free will (Joshua 24:15; John 7:17; Isaiah 30:1; Luke 7:30). This was important as love is only truly exercised from one being to another if chosen freely. This is a common-sense idea; if we could will others to love us, they do not love – we simply willed them to act like it. It is clear in Scripture love is God’s primary motivation and the driving force of all His efforts to bring us to repentance (1 Timothy 2:4; John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9). Free will, in its simplest form – means simply that – we can make choices – good or bad (Matthew 23:37). Inherently, this means we can choose any range of things – and that we have responsibility for those choices – as it is our free will. Calvinists take God’s sovereignty to an absolute state, where God’s sovereignty never gave us effective-free will, but only a sense of “free will” that is ultimately limiting. That by design we technically-could choose God, but we never do, so His design is therefore defective, but is rendered mute again by His sovereignty.

 Now, logically, there is nothing preventing this from being true if “god” was evil (by his own definition, ironically). If “god” created the world, knowing full well some people through his own design (not just his foreknowledge, but through his own design and therefore intent) would never choose Christ, he could do that. But then “god” would not be a loving “god”, a “god” who forgives – but rather he would be an arbitrary “god”, a “god” who designs with the logical-intent to destroy and punish and torture part of his creation by default, ultimately out of his own pleasure. This is not a “god” who wishes all men to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9), but a “god” who really is not deserving of worship. This is not the “god” I believe in at all; I don’t think that false “god” exists. It’s hard to even proof-text such a “god” to exist.

 So many common-sense, every-day, simple terms must be redefined to take the self-meshed together “Gospel of Calvin” and make it work – free will, God’s sovereignty, salvation, justice, etc. None of the conventional definitions work in the context of a “god” with a design who redefines free will to mean we could choose “god” but never do, so although the design limits our free will, it is still our fault by such design, condemning ourselves to hell, though we could nothing about it but have a theoretical-but-never-going-to-happen redefined sense of “free will”.

 A simple way of explaining Calvinism is to imagine a raffle where you can buy tickets, but nobody wins unless the official of the raffle arbitrarily chooses a winner, regardless of whether a ticket was purchased by that person. That’s not a raffle anymore than free will is not effectively free will. It either is or it is not free will by logical terms.

Calvinism confusing because it’s false (1 Corinthians 14:33). It’s confusing because it forces us to take Scriptures from all over the Bible – out of their surrounding contexts – and mash them together. It forces us to redefine everyday words we understand in a legitimate, common, well-understood context and change them to mean something completely different just and only under this one particular so-called doctrine.

Calvinism’s appeal of giving God “all” the credit (again, a false, exaggerated redefinition of the concept) for salvation, for taking man’s sinful place and redefining free will to make it effectively non-free, for ripping Scripture out of context and using it to prove a point truly only popularized by men a few hundred years ago (feeding off of other man-made material here and there since before that time), does not validate this false doctrine (1 Timothy 6:3).

Calvinism sees resurgence here and there for the same reason it has from when it first “caught on” hundreds of years ago – it’s so fundamentally different – that it appeals to a certain population who feels its extreme-differences make it valid by its uniqueness. You might say that God is so different, that His ideas inherently have to be alien. Really, Calvinism’s original appeal is that the Catholics didn’t like it; there was no better reason to accept “anything” in the post-Reformation world than if the pope rejected it (2 Timothy 4:3). More valid-sounding reasons have arisen since that time, but that was the original motivation, and that motivation lives on in new, leech-like derivatives to this day.

The final nail in the false doctrine of Calvinism is Calvinists cannot answer the most obvious question of all: if God could save all, and none can effectively choose salvation for themselves, why wouldn’t He save all? Their pat, genuine answer is “I don’t know” (again, see above video, near the end). The simplest response to this is that a false doctrine only answers questions in such a way that arbitrarily, necessarily puts God in a morally-indefensible place.

Do I doubt the sincerity of Calvinists preachers, teachers, or theologians? No, sincerity has nothing to do with it. Sincerity does not validate any truth or invalidate it for that matter. Sincerity is merely a measure of how much somebody truly believes an idea; the idea itself is left out of the sincerity-equation. Everywhere from Mormons to Jehovah Witnesses to we to Calvinists to Jihad-Terrorists sincerely believe what they believe. What matters – and what matters alone – is if the truth itself stands up to scrutiny. Calvinism does not stand up. Its falsehood arises because the whole Gospel does not affirm its man-made tenets. Everywhere it goes it divides. It needs to be dropped, repented of, and shunned away, so a world that needs to hear, respond, believe, and obey the Gospel can do so without an arbitrary belief it is – or is not – going to be done for them.