

The Error of Conditionalism

Written by Sylvester Hassell

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A critique of free-will in eternal salvation.

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While the essence of heathen philosophy is fatalism, the great majority of heathens believe and practice a conditional system of religion, holding that their salvation depends upon their own works and sacrifices. This is even the case with the Mohammedans. So the ancient Pelagians made man his own saviour; as do the modern Socinians, Deists, Arians, and Unitarians. The Semi-Pelagians (the Greek Catholics), dividing man into three parts, body, soul, and spirit (like Greek philosophers), maintained that, while the body and soul of man were corrupted by the fall of Adam, the spirit, including the will, was not corrupted, and, being free and pure, can and must take the first step in regeneration, and then the graces of God will meet and help it, and, if the will continues to cooperate with Divine grace, the man will be saved. The Arminians (the Roman Catholics, Quakers, Wesleyan Methodists, and Free-Will Baptists, and in reality nearly all the Protestant Religious World of to-day, although in opposition to their own original Articles of Faith, the Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and New School Baptists, and a small fragment of one Primitive Baptist Association in Northern Alabama), represent mankind as entirely corrupted by the fall, and needing Divine grace to operate upon them before they can think or will any good thing, but hold that Divine grace operates upon all men, and that each man's salvation actually depends upon the use which his will makes of that grace.

All these systems of salvation are superficial, rationalistic, and inconsistent with themselves and with the Scriptures and with Christian experience; they are all forms of Pharisaism or self-righteousness; they make the gift of God's Son and Spirit more a matter of debt than of grace to the human family, a compensation for their fall in Adam; and they depreciate the atonement of Christ and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (thus tending to undeify the Son and the Spirit of God), and exalt the ability, pride, and work of man above the work of God in salvation, since they represent that God does or offers to do the same for all men, and man himself does that which really saves him. The latest and finest forms of conditionalism while admitting the clear Scripture teaching that a right will and repentance and faith and love are the gifts of God's Spirit to the regenerated sinner, {Ps 110:3; Php 2:13; Ac 5:31; Zec 12:10; 1Co 12:9; Ga 5:22; Eph 1:17-20; 2:8-10; Php 1:6,29; Heb 12:2; Ro 5:5; 1Jo 4:19} inconsistently represent these gifts of the Holy Spirit as conditions of salvation. These unscriptural systems thus destroy themselves. "All the promises of God in Christ are yea and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." {2Co 1:20} All the unconditional spiritual promises of God, from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures, engage to work in His people all the conditions of the conditional promises, and thus ensure their salvation. {Ge 3:15; 12:3; 2Sa 23:5; Ps 110:3; Isa

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27:13; 35:10; 42:16; 45:17; Jer 31:33-37; Eze 36:25-27; 37:1-14; Zec 12:10-14; 13:1,7-9; Mt 1:21; 25:34; Joh 6:37-40; 10:15,27-30; 17:2-3,24; Ac 13:48; Ro 5:19-21; 8:28-39; 2Th 3:18,18; 2Ti 1:9-10; 1Pe 1:1-2; 1Jo 5:11-12; Re 1:5-6; 21:27}

All genuine reformations of religion have been based upon the doctrine of man's total depravity and ruin and his absolute dependence upon the perfectly free grace of God for spiritual life and all spiritual blessings.