

March 1, 2020

## Wresting the Scriptures (No. 2)

On page 61 of **The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches** by Edward T. Hiscox, the following statement is made: “We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is **wholly of grace** through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God.... (emphasis mine bw). Reference is given to the following Scriptures as though they teach this doctrine: Eph. 2:5; Matt. 18:11; I John 4:10; I Cor. 3:5-7; Acts 15:11; John 3:16.

No right thinking person denies the essentiality of the grace of God in man's salvation. The Scriptures cited **do** make reference to God's grace or the effect of His grace. But is salvation “wholly of grace?” “Wholly” is an adverb, meaning: (1) “entirely; altogether, quite,” (2) “To the whole amount; extent, etc.” (3) “So as to comprise or involve all.” (**The American College Dictionary**, page 1393). Hence, if the “salvation of sinners is **wholly** of grace,” then man is saved by grace and by nothing else! His salvation by grace may thus be void of faith, love (on the part of man), obedience, study, righteous living, etc..

“Grace” denotes divine favor that comes from God (2 Cor. 1:12; Rom. 5:15). Man is the recipient, but not the giver of grace as it pertains to his salvation. Therefore, if salvation is “**wholly of grace**,” God does everything and man does nothing as it affects the salvation of man. Hence, God not only could be credited for saving the saved; He could also be blamed for losing the lost! In other words, **if** “the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace,” **then** since God is the Source of grace, He is “wholly” responsible for some people's salvation and other people's condemnation! He thus is made a “*respector of persons*,” which the apostle Peter plainly denied (cf. Acts 10:34-35).

However, in all fairness to Mr. Hiscox and to the preachers of that order who adhere to and teach the things taught in his book, we do not state that they actually believe that God should be charged thusly. Conversely, he states on the very next page (p. 62) in his book that justification is “**solely through faith in Christ**” (emphasis mine, bw).

This, however, puts Mr. Hiscox (a “D.D.,” mind you) in an even worse dilemma. The expression “**solely** through faith in Christ” also excludes everything else, including grace! The truth of the matter is that man is saved by “**grace...through faith...**” (Eph. 2:8). Neither “*grace*” nor “*faith*” makes void the other. Furthermore, as the **grace** of God was active even to the point of giving His Son Who gave Himself to die on the cross, the **faith** of man must also be active, obedient, or working, lest it be “*dead*” (James 2:20), and therefore unavailing.

Friend, let us reject the creeds of men. It is true that the apostles were considered “*unlearned and ignorant men*” (Acts 4:13), but they are easier to understand than the

“D.Ds.” of today, and their writings make much more sense. Of course, this could be explained by the fact that “*they*” (the apostles) had been with Jesus, received their message from Jesus and were inspired by the Holy Spirit (John 17:8; 16:13; 14:26, etc.).

\*\*\* —B. Witherington