



A Truth Maligned.

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by

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A great and wonderful truth has been so misrepresented this century that it is practically seen by most Christians today as a 'heresy'. That truth is God's sovereignty in the election of the saints.

This apostasy has been greatly aided and abetted by recent publications which have confused the doctrine with the writings of men. Under the unfortunate 'nickname' (as Spurgeon called it) of 'Calvinism' the great Biblical and Reformational doctrines of Divine Grace were upheld against grave heresy.

In recent years in an effort to overthrow this history, a mischievous attack was launched against John Calvin. As imperfect as he was, he has been accused of everything from murder to alcoholism in an effort to sully these teachings of grace, and by inference those of the Reformers.

In the early sixteenth century a certain Jacob Arminius began teaching doctrines that ran contrary to many Church 'Confessions' of the day including the Belgic Confession of Faith. In 1610 he drew up *Five Points in opposition* to the *accepted* doctrines of Grace. They became known as the five '*Remonstrants*'.

These broadly stated:

1. God's election is based on God's foreknowledge and man's ability in free will and repentance...
2. Christ's death did not actually secure salvation of any particular man but made it possible for all men to be saved.
3. The need for regeneration. (However, this differed from the Reformers, watering down the doctrine of *total inability*).
4. God's grace could be resisted totally...God might try to convert and could fail.
5. Possible loss of salvation after conversion.

Between 1618 - 1619 the *Council of Dort* was convened to investigate these five points and concluded they were *heresy*. They published a *refutation* consisting of *Five Points*. The men who attended this Council were considered to be the *finest Protestant theologians and preachers* of their time.

Because Calvin's quotes were used by the Council, his name has become linked with the findings. They simply saw his Biblical teachings on the subject as correct, considering they had already been taught by the church Fathers beforehand. Many Christians today labour under the false belief that Calvin was present during the meetings of the Council of Dort. He had been dead for 146 years when they began!

These five points brought into play a systematic theology much later dubbed '**TULIP**', or the '**Five Points of Calvinism**':

- T) *Total Depravity*; (taught as 'Total Inability') Man is totally *unable* of himself to respond spiritually to God's Gospel. (Rom.8:6,7; Rom.3:10-11; Jer.17:9; Is.64:6,7...)
- U) *Unconditional Election* (God elects, chooses His people of His own determination (Eph.1:5,9,11; 1Thess.1:4; 1Pet.1:2,10; Tit.1:1; Rom.8:33; 11:5,7; Col.3:12; Rom.9:15-18; Gal.1:15,16; Jn.6:37; 5:21...))
- L) *Limited Atonement* (Not a term used by many historic 'Calvinists'. Spurgeon called it '*Particular Redemption*'). The blood of Jesus is *sufficient* for *all* humans to be saved. But it *will* in the end be *effective* for only some, (considering 'few' will *ultimately* be saved). (Jn.10:11-15; Heb.10:14; Matt.20:28; 1Cor.15:22; Matt.1:21; Rev.5:9,10...)
- I) *Irresistible Grace*. Those drawn will not refuse divine Grace but 'shall come' to Him, (Jn.6:37-40,44; Ez.36:26; Jn.3:27...) (This did *not* teach man is '*forced*' or is a '*robot*')
- P) *The Perseverance (Preservation) of the saints* (Jude 24; Eph.4:30; Phil.1:6; Jn.10:28; Jn.6:39,40; Rom.8:29,39...)

Today the word ‘Calvinism’ is touted as the label for these five points which are said to be the ‘doctrines’ of Calvin. But the five points were actually a Biblical *refutation* against a ‘heresy’. The detractors of sovereign grace openly accuse Calvin and many other Reformers of not fully shedding Roman Catholicism. *Yet, it was Arminianism that actually brought the church more into line with Roman dogma* – that human cooperation is required in justification and that one can fall away and be lost. The contradiction here is simply staggering. Along with other Biblical truths, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in the election of the Saints was *restored* at the time of the Reformation, *in opposition to Rome!*

To effectively prepare a seedbed for this Arminian infiltration, all those teaching sovereign Grace are being discredited. The Reformers, the Puritans and great divines of the last two centuries. Charles Haddon Spurgeon and several prominent living identities are now attracting special attention. A ‘Fundamentalist’ ministry has just accused Spurgeon of ‘contradicting himself’ over this matter. Problem is - none can show where! Said the ‘Prince of Preachers’: ‘...*there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the Gospel. If we do not preach Justification by Faith, without works; nor unless we preach the Sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the Cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel that lets saints ‘fall away’ after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having once believed in Jesus - such a gospel I abhor.*’

Spurgeon also taught on the folly of reconciling two ‘friends’ - that men are commanded to repent and believe and are responsible.../ ...and men are unable to repent and believe of themselves because of their Adamic nature. *These divine truths cannot be reconciled with human logic!*

A ‘heresy’ introduced centuries ago has re-emerged in the 20th century, largely replacing the truth found in the doctrines of Sovereign Grace. This theology elevates man and thereby dethrones God. It claims God bestows salvation on those who are in some way able to choose God. *But the natural man cannot and will not of himself choose God!* (Rom.8:7; 1Cor.2:14; Eph.1:4,5; Jn.15:16; Rom.3:11).

The great historic confessions give clear evidence of the ‘doctrines of grace’. The majority of preachers, evangelists, revivalists, were all ‘Calvinistic’ eg. Hugh Latimer, John Owen, John Bunyan, William Carey, Murray McChesney, George Whitefield, John Newton, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, David Brainerd, John Eliot, John Paton, Martyn Lloyd Jones, Tyndale...the list is long and distinguished...

It would appear that the majority of Christians today hold to the doctrines of Arminius rather than those of sovereign election. It’s time to look beyond the ‘labels’ and the characters and discover which doctrines are ***Biblical!*** Under the doctrines upheld by the Council of Dort all the great genuine revivals have occurred. Believers were instilled with the truth of God’s eternal choice of them, and His determination that none would be lost, but raised on that Last Day.

About the author

Mike Claydon is an author and editor of Apostasy Alert and Israel Report, an e-mail newsletter with subscribers around the world. He has had decades of experience in counselling and theological writings. He is also the co-editor of the growing worldwide publication 'Diakrisis (Australia)'.