#### CHOSEN AND CALLED

"When God converts a sinner and translates him into the state of grace, he frees him from his natural bondage under sin and, by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good."

## Westminster Confession of Faith

- •The "eternal purpose in election" lies behind all of the covenants in redemptive history... chosen from eternity
- Election God's choice of particular people as recipients of his merciful grace in his Son out of the mass of condemned humanity

**Key Question Here**- How depraved are we? How much do we need God's help to come to salvation and live for Him?

- Prevenient grace grace that "goes before"
  - Arminians (James Arminius) claimed that God has given sufficient prevenient grace to everyone for regeneration, so it is now up to us to choose Christ or reject Christ
- Sufficient grace enough grace to enable sinners to respond positively to God if they choose to do so
- Efficient grace regeneration as well as faith and repentance as gifts

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# The famous TULIP of Calvinism

Total Depravity
(AKA Total Inability and Original Sin)
Unconditional Election
Limited Atonement
(also known as Particular Atonement)
Irresistible Grace
Perseverance of the Saints
(also known as Once Saved Always Saved)


# James Arminius issued their Five Points of the Remonstrants in 1610:

- God's election of sinners is conditional (based on foreseen faith); (U)
- Christ died to make salvation possible for every person; (L)
- all human beings are born in sin and therefore incapable of being saved apart from grace; (T)
- this grace is offered to all and may be resisted; (I)
- it is possible for regenerate believers to lose their salvation.(P)

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	TULIP of Calvinism vs.	Arminianism		
	Total Depravity	Deprivation		
	Unconditional Election	Conditional Election		
	Limited Atonement	Unlimited Atonement		
	Irresistible Grace	Resistible Grace		
	Perseverance of the Saints	Assurance & Security		
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- Semi-Pelagianism grace is necessary for the continuance of salvation, but free will initiates the process
- The Roman Catholic Church has held a semi-Pelagian view
- But an Augustinian strain within the Catholic Church denounced Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism
- This Augustinian strain influenced the Reformers

## WHY DO SOME BELIEVE AND OTHERS NOT?

- Reformed and Lutheran confessions agree on much
- A difference is the Reformed belief that all of those for whom Christ died will be effectually called by the Spirit and none of those who are justified and regenerated will fail to persevere to the end

# Unbelief: The Bondage of the Will

- Our will is not free with respect to God because our nature is in bondage to unbelief
- Lutheran and Reformed differ from Arminians on their view of rebirth
- Our rebirth is monergistic (one work, namely God) rather than synergistic (cooperation)

## WHY DO SOME BELIEVE AND OTHERS NOT?

# Belief: Electing, Redeeming, and Regenerating Love

- In Reformed theology, election is unconditional, not dependent on anything that God foresaw in us, but on his merciful purpose in his Son
- No one is saved by divine coercion, and no one is rejected apart from his or her own will
- Humans are alone responsible for their hardness of heart, but God alone softens and re-creates the hearts of his elect

#### WHY DO SOME BELIEVE AND OTHERS NOT?

## Effectual Calling and the Question of Coercion

- Divine call comprised of an outward and inward call
- Outward call God summons the whole world to Christ through preaching of the gospel
- Inward call the Spirit illumines the hearts of his elect and gives them faith through the gospel
- The internal call is an effectual call
- In the outward call, Christ delivers himself to all as the only Saviour
- In the inward call, the Spirit effectually draws sinners to Christ so they actually receive the gift announced to them in the gospel

#### CONVERSION: "LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH..."

- In regeneration we are passive, but in conversion we are active (regeneration is our salvation, conversion involves us submitting to God and changing combining our efforts with His)
- This does not mean that in conversion our salvation shifts from God's sovereign grace to our activity and cooperation
- The salvation that has been given is worked out by that same Spirit, through the same gospel, in a genuine relationship


#### THE MEANING OF UNION

- Union with Christ we are united to Christ by the Spirit through faith
- •The "marvelous exchange" Christ assumes our debts and we inherit his wealth (Bernard of Clairvaux)
- United to Adam, we accrued nothing but debts; in Christ, our debts are imputed to him and his righteousness is imputed to us
- Being in Christ is a fact that can never be improved, diminished, or withdrawn
- We grow experientially in this union... this mystical aspect stressed by both Luther and Calvin.


## MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF UNION

- Two tendencies are to reduce it either to the forensic (legal- evidence) or mystical-organic aspect
- Reducing it to forensic aspect reduces salvation to the objective work of Christ and the gifts of justification and adoption
- Reducing it to mystical aspect then emphasizes the subjective aspect of our relationship with Christ to the point that his benefits are made the goal rather than the basis


## **JUSTIFICATION**

John Calvin- "[Justification is] the primary article of the Christian religion... the main hinge on which religion turns... the principal article of the whole doctrine of salvation and the foundation of all religion."

- Justification and adoption are two blessings of being united to Christ
- The claim "God justifies the wicked" lies at the heart of the gospel
- Christ, sinless in himself, becomes representatively the greatest sinner who ever lived, while "in him we become the righteousness of God" (2Co 5:21)

# **JUSTIFICATION**

Roman Catholic view – justification is a process of becoming actually and intrinsically righteous

- The initial justification at baptism eradicates guilt and original sin, as well as infuses the habit (or principle) of grace into the recipient
- One merits grace (and eventually final justification) by cooperating with this infused grace
- So final justification according to Rome depends on the works of the believer, which God graciously accepts as meritorious


# **JUSTIFICATION**

# **Divergences among Protestants**

- Charles Finney considered justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to be "absurd"
- In liberal Protestantism, justification is a consciousness of the realization that God never really was at enmity with the believer
- New Perspective on Paul critical of Reformation doctrine of justification, arguing for the need for a final justification in part dependent on our works

#### SANCTIFICATION AND PERSEVERANCE

"Many indeed acknowledge that we are justified by the righteousness of Christ, but seem to think that – at least they act as if – they must be sanctified by a holiness they themselves have acquired."

Herman Bavinck

- Separating justification from sanctification is as serious as confusing them as it leads to the notion that sanctification is the result of human effort
- There are calls in Scripture to imitate Christ, but this is only possible because of being united to Christ through faith

## SANCTIFICATION AND PERSEVERANCE

- In the act of justification, works and grace are the fruit of faith
- The faith that receives Christ apart from works for justification also receives Christ for works in sanctification
- The order is first justification, then good works; not first good works, then justification

## JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

- Two common theological pitfalls when considering sanctification:
  - Legalism
  - Antinomianism
- The law is good, but it cannot heal
- · Both heresies result in a weak view of God's law
- Legalism weakens the law because it must lower the bar to a goal that is achievable
- Antinomianism weakens the power of the law to guide us in pursuing good works out of gratitude for salvation

## **ESCHATOLOGY**

- Like the kingdom, its heirs find themselves in an eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet"
- And like the kingdom, our renewal is already here but not yet consummated


## PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

- If there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ on the sole basis of Christ's righteousness, then a reversal of the court's verdict is impossible
- There is no indication in Scripture that God effectually calls (i.e., regenerates) those whom he has not chosen or that he draws into union with his Son those whom he allows finally to perish
- But apostasy is not only hypothetical; it actually happens
- Hebrews 6 describes some who are part of the church who have nevertheless failed to embrace the gift of salvation

## THE DOCTRINE OF GLORIFICATION

- Glorification is our future hope that we will be joined together with Christ head and members in unending joy
- In glorification, the "already" and the "not yet" converge, so that we will no longer be both justified and still a sinner.
- Two broad streams of thought on glorification:
  - Glorification leads to an *essential* (in our essence) union with God (Origen); an eternal circle rather than a historical line from promise to fulfillment
  - Biblical model it is not a question of going back to an origin, but of going forward to a place where we've never been


#### THE DOCTRINE OF GLORIFICATION

- Reformed theology is critical of the synergism that dominates the Eastern and Western ideas of deification
- While Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism deny forensic justification in favor of deification and sanctification, Reformed theology affirms all of these aspects of our union with Christ
- *Theōsis* (or the beatific vision) does have a discernable place in Reformed theology, but only on a non-Platonist map (glorification)
- •Reformed theology affirms that the dignity of this glory or beatific vision belongs to every believer, while denying that any believer attains it in this age